

## **HR Intern Program Introduction**

By 2005, 76 percent of the journeymen and 86 percent of the senior Human Resources staff throughout VA will be eligible to retire. Because of the number of retirements projected and to help with VA's succession planning overall, the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) HR Intern Program is being reinstated Department-wide.

The newly revised HR intern program is available on the OHRM web page, <http://vaww.va.gov/ohrm/HRLibrary/HRLibrary.htm>. Forty-seven people from the VA Administrations and staff offices worked on this project -- each experts in their respective HR functional areas. The document is comprehensive and proscriptive in nature and is designed to enhance the technical expertise of HR practitioners Department-wide. It can be downloaded locally and it is designed to train selected candidates as Human Resources Specialists leading to further development and assignment at the full performance level.

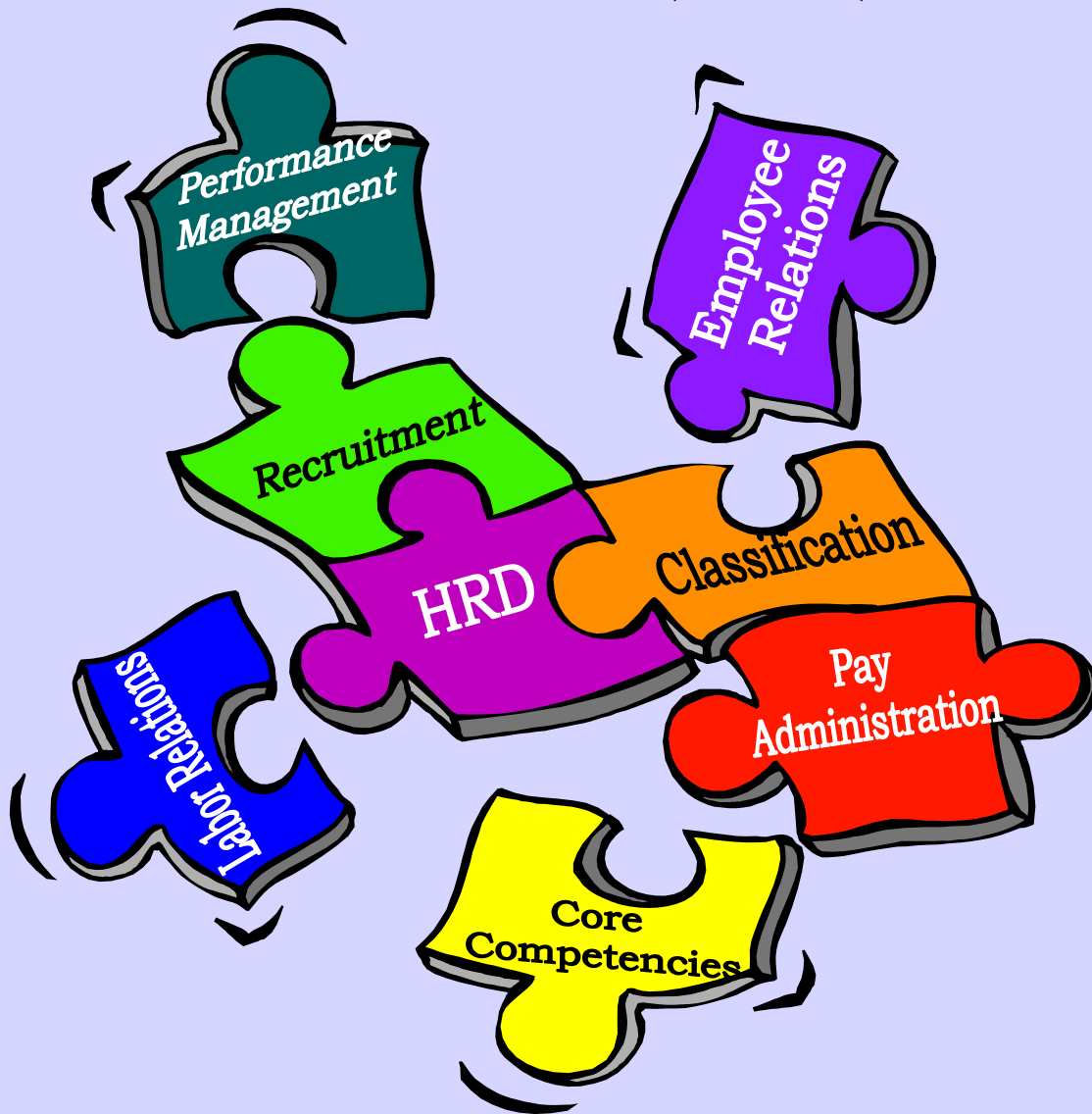
The VA Human Resources Management Intern Program has not been active since 1995. Reinstating the program is critical to the management of human resources in VA and it will help to alleviate the succession planning concerns facing the HR occupation.

OHRM (053)

11/02



## **OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (OHRM)**



## **DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HR INTERN TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

**Human Resources Management  
Intern Training and Development Program**

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# PREFACE

By 2005, 76 percent of the journeymen and 86 percent of the senior HR staff throughout the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will be eligible to retire. In addition, since 1995, the VA Human Resources (HR) Intern Program has been inactive. And, in the last few years, the nature of HR work has changed dramatically because of organizational realignments and downsizing, budget cutbacks, decentralization of authority, regional consolidations, and advances in technology.

Consequently, now more than ever, VA HR practitioners, to be truly effective and competitive with their colleagues in other executive Departments and agencies, need to demonstrate competency in the areas of consulting, resource allocation, strategic planning, facilitation, and information technology, as well as, the traditional HR specialties such as classification, recruitment, staffing, employee relations, and labor management relations. Moreover, knowledge of the closely related fields of diversity and equal employment opportunity are important in order to totally respond to our customers' concerns and provide the best human resources management advice possible.

**Features of the New Edition.** This version of the VA HR intern program is more comprehensive in nature than the previous iterations. The length of the actual training program has been expanded from one to two years. For each HR competency, pertinent learning objectives, learning activities, and recommended training methods are given.

A glossary HR competencies and definitions and a bibliography of suggested readings have been added. Web sites and hyper links (where possible) have been included to facilitate and expand the resources available to accommodate a wide range of readers.

Descriptions of learning methods are included from the OPM *Model Two-Year Training Plan for Entry-Level Federal Human Resources (HR) Specialists (GS 5-9)*, currently under development, with

publication expected in FY 2003. In addition, there is information on mentoring and establishing a community of practice from the *VA Training and Development Plan for HR Professionals, FY 2002*, published by the Office of Human Resources Management.

Reinstating the VA HR Intern Program is critical to the management of human resources throughout the Department of Veterans Affairs. This publication is designed to enhance the technical expertise of HR practitioners, return consistency to the management and practice of human resources in VA, and alleviate the succession planning concerns facing the HR occupation.

## **Acknowledgments**

This publication is truly a joint endeavor. It would not have been possible if it were not for the help and support of HR friends and colleagues working together across organizational lines to retain this knowledge.

VA, like many other Federal departments and agencies, is facing a huge “brain drain” in the next five years. Recognizing it is now time to put pen to paper (before it is too late), the Office of Human Resources Management wishes to recognize and express genuine gratitude to the following individuals who generously contributed their time and knowledge to this publication:

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## PURPOSE

The Human Resources Management Intern Program is designed to train selected candidates as Human Resources Specialists leading to further development and assignment to positions at the full performance level. This Program provides the foundation for recruiting and developing HRM interns from entry to the full performance level through planned training, rotational assignments, and on-the-job work experiences.

The training plan can be modified for local adaptation. By providing the general framework, however, it is expected that the participants will receive more uniform training. Also, by providing the outline for training with suggested resources to acquire the training, the interns are more likely to develop the requisite skills and competencies needed to function as effective HR professionals in today's workforce.

The HRM Intern Program, however, is not intended to meet all replacement needs for HR Specialists in VA. To the contrary, it is meant to complement the human resources management staffing and development programs conducted by field stations. Therefore, stations are encouraged to locate and develop their own HR staffs whenever possible, using the variety of resources available.



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## OBJECTIVE

The interns will receive training in the traditional HR functional areas of human resource management and the core competencies described in VA's HR publication, *Human Resource Management Competencies—A Resource Guide for HR Professionals*, July 2000. The information in the Guide is presented in a logical and systematic way. An electronic version of the Guide in pdf format can be found at the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) web site, <http://vaww.va.gov/ohrm/HR Library/HR Library/htm>.

The general (core) competencies discussed in the Guide are understanding the role of human resources; understanding the business; communicating; and being a change consultant and strategic partner. These five core competencies combined with HR technical expertise are applicable to all HR professionals. The emphasis on these competencies is based on a VA-wide survey of managers, supervisors, and HR staff and HR competency models developed by the International Personnel Management Association (IPMA), the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA).

The Guide is a good resource for identifying the competencies needed to effectively perform HR work today; it can be useful to the intern and supervisor in preparing a Personal Development Plan (PDP) or Individual Development Plan (IDP) to develop those competencies (note the purpose of these forms are the same). The Veterans Health Administration uses the PDP Form. An electronic version of the PDP is under development and will be available in the near future. A sample PDP and a sample IDP are shown on **Appendix A**. An electronic IDP form that can be completed online at [www.va.gov/forms/dot/5\\_4692.dot](http://www.va.gov/forms/dot/5_4692.dot); a paper version of the IDP form is available and can be downloaded from web site [www.va.gov/forms/data/5-4692.pdf](http://www.va.gov/forms/data/5-4692.pdf).

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# RESPONSIBILITIES

## ***Office of Human Resources Management***

The Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM), in collaboration with Administration Heads, is responsible for developing the Human Resources Management Intern Program and developing the applicable Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) policy and procedures. In addition, **OHRM** will:

- Provide advice and assistance to the Administrations for effective program implementation.
- Participate with the Administrations in the selection of preceptors and training sites.
- Monitor the progress of the interns from the Administrations and the evaluations of the training programs.

## ***Administration Heads***

**Administration Heads** will ensure that their field installations carry out the requirements of the HRM intern program. In addition, the respective **Administration Head, or designee** will:

- Specify the preceptors and selection of training sites.
- Concur in the facilities' selections of HRM interns.
- Coordinate with the host training sites in the placement of the interns at the completion of the training programs.
- Monitor the interns' progress and the evaluations of the training programs.

## ***All Field Installations***

Field stations will publicize the program so employees are aware of career opportunities in the field of human resources management. The publicity will include information about how to apply for the training program. Targeted recruitment activities will be conducted to ensure the candidate supply pool includes applicants from underrepresented groups.

## ***Designated Training Installations***

Designated (host) training facilities are selected each fiscal year.

The selection of training sites (and any changes that might occur during the fiscal year) will be based on factors such as the quality, adequacy, and effectiveness of the human resources management staff; the desire of stations to participate; and the level of funding available for the program. The individual training sites have primary responsibility for announcing and selecting the employees for the HR intern program who will train at their facility.

Field facilities and VISN, MSN, SDN, or Central Office may also establish intern positions using **local** funds for the intern's tuition and associated training expenses. Stations that establish such intern positions do so with the intention of having the intern remain at that facility upon completion of the training program.

In **all** cases where intern positions are established, however, the following conditions should exist:

- The number of applicants in the recruiting area should be sufficient to yield high quality candidates;
- The Human Resources Management Officer (HRMO) and his/her staff must have the interest and capabilities to provide proper training and leadership in all areas of Human Resources Management, and the HR function should experience the full range of employee relations issues, and for VHA facilities, Title 38 issues;

- The organization and configuration of the HR staff should reflect knowledgeable HR Specialists with either a generalist or specialty focus. The facility should have an active Labor Management Relations (LMR) program, with one or more bargaining units, to expose the intern to a variety of LMR issues (Title 38 and Title 5);
- The preceptor or supervisor of record should develop a schedule (plan) of training for the intern to follow which ensures the intern is provided the best training possible;
- The training environment at the facility must be conducive to learning, reflect stability, and exemplify the full scope of the human resources management function;
- The location would ideally be in geographic proximity to other VA facilities, e.g., a VHA medical center or outpatient clinic co-located with a VBA regional office or outreach center, and/or NCA cemetery to facilitate site visits and training details to the other installations; and
- Preferably for VHA sites, the training facility would have an active medical school affiliation, be situated in a desirable geographic location, reflect desirable economic and cost of living conditions, be in a community with favorable educational and cultural amenities, etc.

### ***Human Resources Management Officer***

Usually, the Human Resources Management Officer (HRMO) will serve as **preceptor** for the intern. The preceptor or supervisor of record is responsible for administering the intern's training according to the *Human Resources Management Intern Training and Development Program*, November 2002. In this role, the HRMO/supervisor of record will be counselor, evaluator, and general facilitator of the intern's developmental process. He/she is responsible for working with the intern to develop a Personal Development Plan (VHA) or an Individual Development Plan (IDP), monitoring the intern's progress, and making periodic reports to the respective Administration officials, as appropriate. The interest and

involvement of the HR officer are important factors for the intern to successfully accomplish the objectives of the program.

### ***Human Resources Management Intern***

The HRM intern is expected to take initiative in pursuing instructional objectives, display integrity and professionalism in carrying out assignments, and cooperate with the HRMO and facility staff throughout the program.

# GENERAL PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

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Intern positions will be filled throughout the fiscal year. The training will be conducted at a number of designated VA facilities. Applicants must meet the minimum requirements of OPM's *Qualification Standards Handbook for General Schedule Positions*, [www.opm.gov/qualifications/sec-iii/a/0200-NDX.HTM](http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/sec-iii/a/0200-NDX.HTM). Entrance into the program will normally be at grade levels of GS-5, GS-7 or GS-9, depending upon the candidate's qualifications. The intern will be assigned to an ongoing position at conclusion of the training program.

The length of the training program will be two years. This period may be extended, under rare or unusual circumstances, e.g., prolonged illness or emergency leave. Requests for program extensions, particularly interns hired under the Federal Career Intern Authority, must be submitted through appropriate Administration channels, to the Office of Human Resources Management (05). Certain program extensions beyond two years may also require OPM approval, depending upon the nature of the appointment, length of extension, or the amount of time requested.

## ***Statement of Understanding***

Prior to entering the training program, interns whose training is centrally funded will sign a Statement of Understanding which pertains to mobility upon completion of the training program and also indicates the intern's agreement to pursue self-development activities throughout their career (**Appendix C**). The Statement of Understanding may be customized to meet Administration needs.

## ***Service Agreement***

In addition, each intern will sign a continued service agreement (CSA) coincident with the start of training in a non-Government facility. The CSA protects the interests of the Department in the

event the intern fails to complete the period of service required in return for the training provided by VA. Each Administration and staff office will establish written procedures for recovering training costs as well as procedures for waiving indebtedness associated with failure to fulfill the required service obligation. For an example of a service agreement see Standard Form 182, Request, Authorization, Agreement and Certification of Training (revised 12/79, 10-part).

# **RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION**

Intern positions will be filled throughout the fiscal year using available recruitment methods and appointing authorities. The designated training sites will have primary responsibility for recruiting HR interns, announcing the opportunities, and choosing the candidates.

Every effort should be made to recruit high quality candidates with equal consideration given to attracting both internal and external applicants. Facilities may choose to recruit locally or extend the area of recruitment beyond the local labor market with appropriate consideration given to local merit promotion plans.

Examples of other methods that may be used to hire entry-level HR Specialists include the Presidential Management Intern Program (PMI); the Federal Career Intern Program (FCIP); the Outstanding Scholar Program; and the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP), or Upward Mobility Programs

As part of the VA affirmative employment efforts, all facilities should widely publicize the program to ensure that minorities, women, and people with disabilities are aware of this career opportunity. This action will endeavor to ensure that the HRM intern program reflects the diversity of our employees and the veterans we serve.



# PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (PDP) OR/INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (IDP)

Each intern, in consultation with his/her preceptor (HR Management Officer or supervisor of record) will develop a detailed Personal Development Plan (PDP) or Individual Development Plan (IDP) (VA Form 5-4692). The IDP form is available online, [www.va.gov/forms/dot/5\\_4692.dot](http://www.va.gov/forms/dot/5_4692.dot); a paper version can be downloaded and printed from [www.va.gov/forms/data/5-4692.pdf](http://www.va.gov/forms/data/5-4692.pdf). VHA uses the PDP--an electronic PDP is under development and will be available in the near future. The PDP/IDP should be completed during the first month of the intern's training program. The PDP/IDP states the kind of work assignments, rotational experiences, and formal training courses the intern can expect to complete during the two-year cycle.

The best PDPs/IDPs are developed to cover a twelve-month period and briefly describe training events that can be accomplished during the year. These plans should be reviewed quarterly, however, at the conclusion of the first year, the preceptor and intern should carefully assess the intern's progress during the first year and together establish new priorities and developmental activities for the following twelve-month period. A sample IDP for an entry-level intern is shown in **Appendix A**.

The process of developing the PDP/IDP is a valuable planning exercise. The preceptor and intern work together to develop a realistic plan for the employee's career development recognizing that each intern enters the program with varying degrees of preparation, competency, and potential for growth. As much as possible, the PDP/IDP should be action-oriented, concrete and specific--to the extent that an objective person from outside the organization could review the plan and would be able to understand the proposed activities.

Whether the intern uses a PDP or IDP form, it is useful for career planning and it can assist the intern and preceptor in clarifying training objectives, identifying learning methods, and allocating resources. Each item on the respective form should be completed electronically or otherwise. Then, the intern and preceptor (Human Resources Management Officer/supervisor of record) should each sign the form indicating agreement with the developmental objectives and allocation of resources.

The HR publication, *Human Resource Management Competencies—A Resource Guide for HR Professionals*, available on the OHRM web site, <http://vaww.va.gov/ohrm/HRLibrary/Library/htm> was designed to help HR professionals identify the competencies (knowledge and skills) needed to do HR work and prepare a plan (PDP/IDP) to develop those competencies. Also, reading VA Pamphlet 05-67(P70440), *Individual Development Planning in the VA*, may be helpful in preparing the IDP. The pamphlet is not available online, however, it can be ordered from the VA Services and Distribution Center, Forms and Publications, Hines, Illinois.

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# PROGRAM EVALUATION

A process for evaluating the intern's training program, which is separate from the intern's performance appraisal, is critical to the employee's development and important to the viability of the program. The assessment process should be ongoing and provide for regular dialogue between the intern and preceptor (HR manager or supervisor of record) and include formal written reports.

Consequently, the HR Manager (host supervisor of record) will prepare a written evaluation of the intern's progress and the effectiveness of the program. In addition, the intern will also complete a written evaluation (a self-assessment of developmental activities completed and competencies developed relevant to the PDP/IDP). These evaluations are important to the integrity of the program and provide the basis for making improvements to the training program.

Both the HR manager/supervisor of record and intern should complete program evaluations at the midpoint of each year (after six months) and at the end of the first and second year of the program. Upon completion of the first year, the intern and preceptor (together) should assess the intern's technical skills and modify the intern's PDP/IDP, if necessary, for the second year.

The assessment reports should be forwarded through proper channels to the Administrations' program offices and a copy provided to OHRM's Human Resources Development Service (053). At the end of the second year of training, a comprehensive listing of all training episodes completed by the intern during the two-year program (formal classroom, on-the-job, rotational assignments, self-development activities, and planned developmental activities) should be submitted with the final narrative report.

The HRMO's evaluation report should include a discussion of the following:

- Employee's strengths (competency areas where the employee excels).
- Areas needing improvement (competency areas where the employee needs to increase knowledge or enhance skills and ability).
- Developmental objectives (recommendations for additional training/developmental activities).
- Short-term career goals (recommendations for future positions or developmental assignments over the next three years or until the intern reaches the journeyman level, whichever comes first).
- Comprehensive list of all training and development activities completed during the two-year training program.

The intern's self-assessment report of developmental activities completed and competencies developed relative to the PDP or IDP should address:

- The effectiveness of the learning activities in developing the intended competencies.
- Any problems encountered.
- Recommendations for changes to the intern's Personal Development Plan or Individual Development Plan.

Six months after the training program has ended and the intern has been assigned to a new position, the new HR Management Specialist will complete a narrative self-assessment of his/her competency for the new assignment. The report should address the following:

- A discussion of any activities that were particularly helpful in preparing the new HR Specialist for his/her assignment.
- A discussion of any areas for which the intern's training program did not provide adequate preparation.
- Topic areas that required more emphasis during training.
- Any developmental activities that should be added or deleted.
- Other suggestions for future iterations of the intern program.

# PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

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The Human Resources Management Officer (HRMO) or supervisor of record at the host facility will be the intern's rating official for *formally* rating the employee's performance during the two year training program. Normally within 30 days of entering on duty, the intern and supervisor of record will discuss the intern's annual performance plan. The performance plan is based on the intern's position description and the training and development plan, as a reference.

The HRMO or supervisor of record will prepare the intern's annual performance appraisal, using VA Form 3482b, according to procedures in VA's performance management program. The performance appraisal will incorporate input from the intern and rotational/developmental assignment supervisors. Copies will be provided to the intern approximately 30 days after the rating period ends. The rotational assignment supervisor must document the intern's progress during the rotational assignment. Shortly after the start of the second year of training, the intern and HRMO/supervisor of record should meet to discuss the intern's performance plan for the second year.

## ***Performance Problems***

Occasionally, the counseling and appraisal process identifies problems relating to an intern's aptitude, ability or attitude. In the case of an intern who receives centralized training funds, the HRMO will work with the the respective Administration to take appropriate action consistent with OPM and VA regulations.

If there are performance problems during a rotational assignment, the rotational assignment supervisor will counsel the intern. If the intern's performance does not improve, the rotational assignment supervisor will report the performance deficiency to the HRMO/supervisor of record.

Interns who do not successfully complete the intern program may be: reassigned to a position of no lower grade and base pay than that which they occupied prior to entering the program; or may be removed from service if serving on an excepted appointment under the Career Intern authority and not a VA career-conditional or career employee immediately before receiving the excepted Career Intern appointment.

# ADVANCEMENT AND PLACEMENT

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Interns may be promoted during the internship depending upon the nature of their appointment and individual qualifications. Notwithstanding any promotion the intern may receive during the course of the training program, interns may be promoted without further competition, to the full performance level of the position assigned at the end of the internship.

Promotions are not guaranteed, however, and are contingent upon fully satisfactory performance, meeting regulatory requirements, and demonstrating the ability to perform work at the next higher grade. Interns should be advised of the potential of the position to which assigned after training and any requirements for further competition for promotion to higher graded positions.

The assignment of the interns, at the conclusion of their training programs, will be coordinated by officials at the respective intern's training facility, the new facility the intern will transfer to at the end of his/her program, and officials in the intern's host Administration in Central Office.

1. Name: M. Smith				2. Position: Personnel Management	
4. Long Term Goal (2 - 3 yrs): Promotion to Senior Specialist and/or HR Manager					
5. CORE COMPETENCY	6. LEVEL	7. DEVELOPMENTAL GOAL	8. DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITY	9. TARGET DATE	10. (s)
<a href="#">Technical</a>	1 and 2	1 - Maintains knowledge and skills through continuing education, journals, and practice 2- Explores environment for best practices and works to implement them	1 - Take OPM course - Personnel Management for the Generalist 2- Research technological practices in HR offices, develop a plan to implement new HR tracking system	1- OPM Course 3/1/01 2 - Plan outline 2/2/01 Final report 4/1/01	
<a href="#">Personal Mastery</a>	1	1 - Takes time to plan each day's work 2 - Participates in training and other self-development activities	1 - Take Eagle - Time Management course 2 - See OPM course above	1- Eagle Course 2/15/01 2 - See OPM course above	
<a href="#">Interpersonal Effectiveness</a>	1	1 - Uses negotiation skills to settle conflicts in the work group 2 - Expresses thoughts, ideas, and concerns clearly	1 - Take course on Negotiations 1 - Take course on ADR 2 - Draft new policy on Family Friendly Leave policy 2 - Conduct a training course on Family Friendly leave	1 - Negotiation Cours -= 6/30/01 1 - ADR course 3/15 - 17/01 2 - Policy draft due 3/15/01 2 - Final Policy 4/1/00 2 - Conduct training NLT 5/1/01	
<a href="#">Customer Service</a>	1	1 - Listens to concerns of customers and resolves complaints and concerns effectively and promptly	1 - Serve as a team member of Med Center Customer Service Task force	1 - 9/30/01	
<a href="#">Flexibility/ Adaptability</a>	1	1 - Looks for better alternatives to "the way we've always done it"	See item 2 in Technical		
<a href="#">Creative Thinking</a>	1	1 - Suggests ways to improve quality and efficiency	See item 2 in Technical		
<a href="#">Systems Thinking</a>		1 - Able to explain how one's work contributes to organizational mission	1 - Develop an in-service training for a block of service on the services HR provides at the Medical Center	1 - 5/1/01	
<a href="#">Organizational Stewardship</a>		1- Speaks favorably of the organization and its people, both at work and in the community	1 - Participate in High School job fair representing VA	1 - 5/15/01	

VA Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM)

Intern Training and Development Program <http://vawww.va.gov/ohrm/HRLibrary/HRLibrary.htm>.



GENERAL DESCRIPTION  
ORGANIZATIONAL STEWARDSHIP

Demonstrates commitment to people  
Empowers and trusts others  
Develops leadership skills and opportunities throughout organization  
Develops team-based improvement processes  
Promotes future-oriented system change

Supports and encourages lifelong learning throughout the organization  
Manages physical, fiscal, and human resources to increase organizational effectiveness  
Builds links between individuals and groups in the organization  
Provides developmental opportunities for employees  
Participates in and fully supports 360 degree assessment  
  
Accepts accountability for self, others, and the organization  
Works to accomplish the organizational business plan

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	
Understands the mission, vision, and values of the organization and acts accordingly	Takes responsibility for the physical and human resources of the work team	Manages toward organizational outcomes within limited budget and staff	Demonstrates organizational business acumen
Speaks favorably of the organization and its people, both at work and in the community	Takes responsibility for the physical and human resources of the work team	Demonstrates leadership by providing support and resources to staff to enable them to carry out the organizational mission	Encourages employee empowerment
Provides support to fellow employees in accomplishing mission	Leads team-based process improvement activities	Goes the extra mile to ensure that all open positions are filled with the best candidates	Provides a positive work environment for the organization
Takes initiative to seek and suggest improvements in how work is done	Encourages diversity of opinions, experiences, and cultures	Develops organizational depth by developing individuals	Demonstrates organizational accountability
Builds an atmosphere of trust by being trustworthy	Stays abreast of changes in VA goals, objectives and initiatives	<a href="#">return to form</a>	Models behavior consistent with expected organizational standards

PERSONAL ASSESSMENT

	ASSESSMENT	
	C = competent	
	ND = needs development	DATE OF REVIEW
LEVEL 1		
LEVEL 2		
LEVEL 3		
LEVEL 4		

## **Training Plan**

Each intern's training program will be two years in length and cover defined learning objectives. However, the intern's grade, GS-5, GS-7 or GS-9, when he/she enters the program will determine the complexity of assignments and degree of supervision the intern receives during training.

Each intern's program should include practical work experience and formal training in the Federal human resources management specialties (including both Title 38 and Title 5, as appropriate). In addition, the intern(s) program should address the core competencies necessary to move the Human Resource profession to a new level so the intern can function as an effective Human Resources Specialist in today's workforce.

The success of the HRM intern program is founded on the principle that each participant will be given the opportunity to acquire essentially the same HR knowledge, skills and abilities regardless of background or future work assignments. To ensure this principle is carried out, a Training Plan with suggested instructional objectives and work assignments is shown in **Appendix B**.

## ***Training Plan Components***

The suggested learning objectives and work assignments in the Training Plan are *not* meant to be all-inclusive. Rather, they are representative of the different HR competencies and they are designed to expose the intern to the technical areas of human resources management, as well as core competencies determined to be desirable to function as an effective Human Resources Specialist in today's workforce.

- The Training Plan incorporates HRM theory, formal coursework, on-the-job teaching and development experiences, rotational assignments, and site visits to VA facilities. Also,

underlying all HR intern training programs must be an emphasis on HRM statutory and regulatory compliance.

- The instructional objectives and recommended learning activities can be modified based on the capabilities of the individual intern in consultation with his/her preceptor (Human Resources Management Officer or supervisor of record). As much as practical, however, the intern should be included in actual work situations like union negotiations, disciplinary hearings, and OPM audits. In addition, the intern's training experiences should include the opportunity to work on special projects like budget briefings that expose the intern to senior management officials at the host training facility.
- Formal training courses can be from a variety of sources, for example, U.S. Department of Agriculture Graduate School, the National Independent Study Center, the Office of Personnel Management, VA or another Federal agency, public and private colleges and universities, and other private sector providers.

The descriptions of learning methods on shadowing and on-the-job training (shown below) come from OPM's *Model Two-Year Training Plan for Entry-Level Federal Human Resources (HR) Specialists (GS 5-9)* which is currently under development, with publication expected in FY 2003.

### **Shadowing**

"Shadowing" is the process in which the entry-level HR specialist will spend a period of time (usually one week or less) with a designated "leader" inside or outside the HR profession or his/her own organization. Time and thought should be given to the selection of a suitable shadow assignment so that it will be beneficial to the career of the entry-level HR specialist. The purpose of a shadow assignment is often to provide new hires, new professionals, or participants in developmental programs with exposure to a managerial workday and give the individual visibility among the organization's managers and executives. It also provides

participants with an opportunity to view decision-making styles and problem solving techniques used in real-life situations. As a result, participants often gain experience in communicating with managers and executives in a one-on-one situation. The following are suggested guidelines for shadow assignments:

- The entry-level HR specialist should have at least one shadow assignment during each of the two years of his/her training.
- The person targeted to be shadowed should be selected based on his/her leadership position in the organization. This person should be known throughout the department or agency for vision, ability to make decisions, and following through on decisions.
- Of the two assignments, one might be within an HR organization (at either a headquarters or field location) and the other should be outside of the typical HR organization.
- The time period for the shadowing assignment should last from three to five days.
- During the course of the assignment, the entry-level HR specialist should engage in leadership benchmarking to identify the leader's personal mission, vision, and values, the actions he/she uses, and the results of his/her actions.
- At the conclusion of the assignment, the entry-level HR specialist should provide a "lessons learned" briefing to the shadowed manager that also includes his/her observations about the experience.

### ***On-the-Job Training (OJT)***

- On-the-job training (OJT) refers to the progressive and developmental work assignments that an entry-level HR specialist will experience. It encompasses a wide variety of activities. It complements, but does not replace, formal classroom training.
- On-the-job training will usually occur in the entry-level HR specialist's office, but may also be accomplished in other offices/divisions or external organizations. On-the-job training (OJT) is easy to implement because it usually occurs where the participant works and there are no travel or tuition expenses involved. It can be tailored for the individual based on his/her skills and experience and can be readily evaluated by his/her supervisor. It allows the new professional to apply and practice new skills and knowledge as they are being learned, in a real work environment, where he/she can get immediate feedback from his/her supervisors, peers, and customers. When travel is limited, it provides the best development option for the new HR specialist. OJT may include one or a combination of the following activities:
  - Details or Rotational Assignments – where the entry-level HR specialist is assigned to an established position in another work area.
  - Shadow Assignments – where the participant observes a senior staff member during his/her work time for a short duration, usually no more than five days.
  - Special Projects – where the entry-level HR specialist is given short-term work assignments in addition to his/her regular duties. Examples of special projects include conducting an HR research study, developing HR assessment tools, working in a delegated examining unit, or

advising employees on Federal benefits during open seasons.

- Self-Study – where the participant, using his/her own initiative and curiosity, reads independently, takes training via the Internet, or conducts HR-related research.

The following information on mentoring and establishing a community of practice is from the *VA Training and Development Plan for HR Professionals, FY 2002*, published by the Office of Human Resources Management.

### ***Mentoring***

Mentoring is an effective way to develop employees in today's workplace. Elizabeth Weinstein in *Mentoring for Success* describes mentoring as a power-free partnership between two people who desire mutual growth. One of the individuals has greater skills, experience, and wisdom. Successful mentors, says Weinstein, are open minded, empathetic, lifelong learners, good communicators, talented, responsible, and system smart. They play the roles of coach, consultant, teacher, and relationship-builder. Mentors choose the roles they will play based on the needs of the protégé.

Each HR practitioner whose technical competency requires development should be encouraged by his/her HR Manager to have a mentor who can serve as a technical advisor. This mentor should be a person with a broad background in the HR profession. Typically, this person in the past would have been a journeyman HR Specialist, HR Team Leader, HR Supervisor or HR Manager. However, an individual's supervisor should not be his/her technical mentor. The mentor can come from anywhere in the VA and does not have to work at the same VA facility as the protégé. The HR Specialist should choose his/her technical mentor, but the relationship must be voluntary for both people.

### ***Community of Practice***

Groups of new and more experienced HR Specialists are also encouraged to establish a Community of Practice (CoP) among themselves. Information about a CoP, along with its purpose and expected outcomes, is explained below. This information is based on NASEA's, *Community of Practice Practitioner's Guide, May 2001*. Copies of the Guide are available from OHRM's, Human Resources Development Service (053).

Communities of Practice provide a collaborative structure to facilitate the creation and transfer of knowledge. With CoPs, organization knowledge can be increased through a network of contacts that help to solve problems and bring about results. They provide specific benefit to individuals, too, by providing the opportunity for peer recognition and continuous learning.

CoPs can take on several forms. For example, the use of instant messaging capabilities like chat rooms, dedicated e-mail groups, and video conferencing can be used to help members stay connected.

Key to the success of a CoP is a collective understanding of its purpose. Knowing the primary purpose will also help the Community define its makeup and the activities to be undertaken. The "bottom line" is that Communities offer practical techniques and a mechanism to create, share, and transfer knowledge among its members.

The essence of a Community is its membership. Participation should be voluntary and the members willing to self-organize and actively participate because of the benefits they derive from membership. Anyone who wants to participate should be welcome in the Community. It's recommended, however, that prospective members include individuals who can learn from each other and have a stake in the Community's success.



**Orientation and Overview (First 3 Weeks)*****Learning Objectives***

- A. Articulate the mission, history, and organization of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).
- B. Describe the mission and functions of the major VA administrations, staff offices, and host training facility.
- C. Demonstrate knowledge of VA programs and organizational structure.
- D. Acquire general understanding of VA programs and operations.
- E. Explain the purpose and relationship of the different HR functional areas.
- F. Describe the purpose of the VA HRM Intern Program and the responsibilities of a preceptor and intern.
- G. State the purpose and role of Office of Personnel Management (OPM) in relation to human resources offices in other independent agencies and executive departments.
- H. Understand the role of the senior officials and HR Manager at the host facility and within the VA hierarchy as a whole.
- I. Learn the purpose and organization of governing HR policy manuals and references.
- J. Develop Personal Development Plan (PDP)/Individual Development Plan (IDP) to formalize training program.
- K. Identify individual to be mentor (review Mentoring section).
- L. Become familiar with VA acronyms and their meanings, e.g., VACO, VHA/VISN, VBA/SDN, and NCA; see VA's acronyms and abbreviations at <http://vaww.execsec>.



### ***Learning Activities***

#### ***Actions***

- Attend a New Employee Orientation Program conducted at host facility.
- View VBA's web-based orientation program at [www.vba-arms.nctsw.navy.mil/admin20/letters/vba00](http://www.vba-arms.nctsw.navy.mil/admin20/letters/vba00)
- Tour the host training facility, e.g., VHA medical center and affiliated medical school, VBA regional office to increase knowledge of VA programs.
- Visit training facility's library/learning resource center.
- Tour other VA facilities in same geographic area, e.g., national cemetery, VBA regional office, and VHA medical center.
- Attend One VA Learning Map and VBA Benefits' Map sessions.
- Meet regularly with preceptor to review/discuss what's being studied.
- Attend station committee meetings with Human Resources Management Officer (HRMO), e.g., Administrative Executive Board and Position Management Committee.
- Visit local Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

#### ***Read/Study***

- Latest Edition of *Annual Report of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs*.
- Review departmental/administration's organizational charts noting line and staff components.
- *Human Resources Management Intern Training and Development Program*, September 2002, publication.
- Latest edition of the *Department of Veterans Affairs Strategic Plan* or visit web site, <http://vaww.va.gov/onevaactivities/plan>
- Latest edition of the *Secretary's Annual Statement*.
- *VA Human Resources Handbooks and Directives*.
- *Organization of Title 5 and Title 38, United States Code*.

- *Code of Federal Regulations 5.*
- *VA Handbook and Directive 5001, General Administration at*
- <http://vaww.va.gov/hrdirectives>.
- Merit Systems Principles, 5 United States Code, Section 2301 at <http://www.opm.gov/omsoe/merit/legal/htm>.
- Prohibited Personnel Practices, 5 United States Code, Section 2302 at <http://www.opm.gov/omsoe/prohibit/legal.htm>.
- National and local union contracts, e.g., *Master Agreement Between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the American Federation of Government Employees.*
- *Human Resource Management Competencies—A Resource Guide for HR Professionals*, July 2000, found on the Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) web page, [http://vaww.va.gov/ohrm/HR Library/HRLibrary.htm](http://vaww.va.gov/ohrm/HRLibrary/HRLibrary.htm).

**Formal Training:** Take “Human Resource Management for Administrative Personnel,” USDA Graduate School (3 days), or comparable course.

**Training Methods:** Discussion, required readings, formal training course.

**Evaluation:** Performance and course completion.

**Understanding the Role of Human Resources (2 weeks)*****Learning Objectives***

- A. List and discuss the major roles of human resources in the Federal government
- B. Compare and contrast the roles of human resources in the Federal government and the private sector
- C. Discuss the major challenges facing human resources in the areas of workforce planning, training and development, and compensation in the federal sector.
- D. Explain how knowing the products and services provided by your parent organization help to clarify your role in human resources
- E. Link organizational effectiveness and efficiency to a diverse workforce

***Learning Activities******Read/Study***

- *Human Resource Champions: The Next Agenda for Adding Value and Delivering Results*. Ulrich, David, Harvard Business School Press, 1997
- *High Impact HR: Transforming Human Resources for Competitive Advantage*. Weiss, David, John Wiley and Sons, 2000
- *Delivering Results, A New Mandate for Human Resource Professionals*. Ulrich, David, Harvard Business School Press
- “Shaping HRD for the new millennium”, Human Resource Development Quarterly, Vol 12, issue 2, pgs 103-104, San Francisco; Summer 2001; Robert L Dilworth
- “Facing the future”, HR Magazine, Vol 47, issue 7, pgs 26-32; Jul 2002; Steve Bates
- “GM drives HR to the next level”, HR Magazine; Vol 47, issue 3, pgs 46-50; Mar 2002; Bill Leonard

## ***Actions***

- Review:
  - [www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov) to get an overview of Human Resources in the Federal government
  - [www.shrm.org](http://www.shrm.org) to get a Human Resources perspective of the private sector
  - [www.gao.gov](http://www.gao.gov) to get a snapshot of studies of Human Resource issues in the Federal sector
  - [www.hrexecutive.com](http://www.hrexecutive.com) to get an “executive” perspective of Human Resources

## **Core Competency - Understanding the Business (2 weeks)**

### ***Learning Objectives***

#### ***(For VHA positions)***

- A. Become familiar with health care services provided to veterans
- B. Learn occupations of health care providers and relationships to one another including hybrid positions.
- C. Learn purpose of state licensing boards and Federation of State Medical Boards.
- D. Know names and purpose of external quality review organizations, e.g., Joint Commission on Hospital Accreditation Organization (JCHAO).
- E. Understand purpose of medical school affiliations and impact on residency and other training programs.

#### ***(For VBA, NCA, and Staff Office positions)***

Research and recall the answers to the most frequently asked questions about VA products and services

### ***Read/Study***

- *History of Title 38 Employment System.*
- *The Title 38 Personnel System in the Department of Veterans Affairs: An Alternate Approach.* A Report by the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board, April 1991.
- *VHA Journey for Change.*
- Review Workforce and Succession Planning information at <http://vaww.va.gov/vaworkforceplanning/index.htm>
- Review *VHA Manuals, M-2, M-3, M-4, M-5, and M-8.*
- Access HyperFAQ Home page at [www.va.gov/hyperfaq/](http://www.va.gov/hyperfaq/) *Note:* This site is an excellent resource for both customers and employees to get a basic understanding of the VA business lines.

## **Actions**

- Participate in an orientation program at a VA Medical Center, VA Regional Office, and a VA National Cemetery.
- With your preceptor, outline specific learning outcomes from each visit.
- Conduct several interviews with business line managers at VA facilities in your local commuting area to learn more about the business and purpose of their organization.

Use the following sample questions from OPM's *Model Two-Year Training Plan for Entry-Level Federal Human Resources (HR) Specialists (GS 5-9)*, currently under development, with publication expected in FY 2003, to conduct the interview. Or, create similar questions of your own:

1. What persuaded you to become a manager/executive in this organization?
2. In your current position, what are some of your most important accomplishments? What are some of the reasons for your success?
3. What do you particularly like about your position?
4. What do you like least about your present position?
5. What responsibilities or results have not come up to your expectations? Tell me some of the things you want to accomplish which have not yet been done. What are some of the reasons?
6. What types of decisions or recommendations are you called upon to make?
7. What do you do in a typical work day/week?
8. What are the most difficult or challenging elements of the job?
9. What are the most important parts of the job? What skills are most essential for effectiveness in this job?
10. What was the greatest learning experience in your career?

**Core Competency – Communicating (2 weeks)*****Learning Objectives***

- A. Discuss the essential elements of oral and written communications
- B. Illustrate the use of Argyris' Ladder of Inference
- C. Explain the differences between interpersonal and group communications
- D. Contrast dialog and conversation
- E. List the essential elements of an effective feedback process
- F. Describe several approaches to conflict resolution and their potential impact on organizational performance
- G. Explain the links between organizational performance and effective communications
- H. Discuss the use of information technology as an enabler of business processes
- I. Formulate and defend a process for a written communications plan which is designed to announce a major business process change
- J. Describe the basic principles of negotiation.

***Study/Read***

- *Powerful Conversations*. Harkins, Philip, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1999
- *Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together: A Pioneering Approach to Communicating in Business and Life*. William Isaacs, Doubleday, 1999
- "Alternative dispute resolution: A business and communication strategy", Netzley, Michael, Business Communication Quarterly: New York; Dec 2001
- "Communications 101"; Dickerson, Chad; Infoworld; San Mateo; May 13, 2002
- "Communication skills for successful relationships: Chapter 7, dialogue skills"; Roth, Sandy; Dental Economics: Tulsa; Aug 2001

- *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In.* Roger Fisher, William Ury, Bruce Patton. Penguin USA, 1991

## **Actions**

- Write a communication plan for a business initiative of a VA organization
- Partner with your mentor/coach to develop the skill of dialogue
- Take online course in communication listed in VALO catalog at <http://vawww.vcampus.com/coursecatalogsearch>
- Select and take online course in communication from [www.Golearn.gov](http://www.Golearn.gov) (OPM site)
- Practice and demonstrate the Ladder of Inference



**Core Competency - Change Consultant (2 weeks)*****Learning Objectives***

- A. Describe four perspectives for viewing an organization
- B. Given different perspectives of an organization, describe the implications for leadership for each of the different perspectives.
- C. Define the role of a performance consultant
- D. Contrast the role of a performance consultant with that of a traditional trainer
- E. List challenges to initiating organizational change
- F. List challenges to sustaining organizational change
- G. Define and discuss systems thinking and its implications for organizational change
- H. Given a recurring business problem, develop a diagnosis, prescribe and defend a change management process to correct the business problem.

***Learning Activities******Read/Study***

- *Bass and Stogdills Handbook of Leadership, Theory, Research, and Managerial Applications.* Bass, Bernard, Ed, The Free Press, New York, 1990
- *The Fifth Discipline, The Art and Science of the Learning Organization.* Senge, Peter, Currency Doubleday, New York, 1990
- *Performance Consulting, Moving Beyond Training.* Dana Robinson, James Robinson Berrett-Koehler Publishers, San Francisco, 1995
- *The Dance of Change.* Senge, Peter et al, Doubleday, New York, 1999
- *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership.* Bolman, Lee G., Deal, Terrance E., Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 1997

- “ Building a shared vision”, SAM Advanced Management Journal; Cincinnati; winter 1997; Keith Denton, pgs. 35-40
- *The Dance of Change*. Senge, Peter et al; Doubleday, New York, 1999
- *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change*. Bridges, William. Perseus, Cambridge, 1991

## **Actions**

- Perform a case study of a real VA business problem.
- Prepare briefing for the preceptor. The briefing should include the following:
  - Define the problem
  - List the concerns
  - Recommend a change management strategy that includes the intended consequences of the changes

**Core Competency -Strategic Partner (2 weeks)*****Learning Objectives***

- A. Define strategic planning
- B. Describe the major steps in the strategic planning process
- C. Discuss the differences between a business need, a training need, and a performance need
- D. Explain the link between organizational vision and performance requirements
- E. Discuss the importance of understanding business priorities in the practice of human resources management
- F. State some of the interpersonal competencies a senior manager might expect of a strategic partner
- G. Identify the process a human resources practitioner can use to be recognized as a strategic partner with a line manager
- H. Discuss and compare the following theories of leadership
  - a. Situational leadership
  - b. Perceptual leadership
  - c. Cognitive leadership
- I. Identify 4 high priority strategic issues for your organization.
- J. Discuss and defend HR implications for solutions to these issues

***Learning Activities******Study/Read:***

- *Bass and Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership*. Bernard Bass, Ed, The Free Press, New York, 1990
- *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*. Peter Senge, et.al; Currency Doubleday, New York, 1999
- “Building a shared vision”, SAM Advanced Management Journal; Cincinnati; winter 1997; Keith Denton, pgs. 35-40
- “What is Strategic Planning?” Video Communicators: Grinstead, Kathlene, producer, United Training Media, 1993

- *Performance Consulting, Moving Beyond Training*, Dana Robinson, and James Robinson, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, San Francisco, 1995

### ***Actions***

- Interview senior line managers to determine what they want in a strategic partner
- Participate in the business/strategic planning meetings of your parent organization
- Take VALO course in Strategic Planning

## **Position Classification and Position Management\* (8 weeks)**

### ***Learning Objectives***

- A. Explain why positions are described and classified by series and grade.
- B. Define applicable legal and regulatory authority.
- C. Identify the relationship of OPM classification standards to definitions in law.
- D. Discuss the relationship of agency authority to law and OPM standards.
- E. Discuss how classification facilitates all other personnel management functions.
- F. Describe the concept of organizational structure.
- G. Evaluate organizational charts, mission and functional statements noting distinctions between line and staff.
- H. Explain the meaning of authorized ceiling, Full Time Employment Equivalent (FTEE) and relationship to estimating budget for salaries and expenses.
- I. Identify different formats for position descriptions (PDs)—narrative; Factor Evaluation System (FES); structure and importance of nine factors; supervisory, leaders (team/work); PD coverage—single vs. IA positions, jobs vs. positions; statements of difference; other significant facts.
- J. Explain why PDs are important, i.e., basic building block in organizations; tasks grouped into major duties; major duties form positions.
- K. Recognize significance of percentages of times, paramount duties; major duties; other duties as assigned; other significant facts.
- L. Complete an Optional Form (OF-8), identify who writes PDs, signs PDs, and determines content.
- M. Describe pay category determinations--General Schedule (GS) or Federal Wage System (FWS); significance of most important function; mixed series, mixed grades.
- N. State the difference between one and two grade interval work.

- O. Explain how to select appropriate classification standards.
- P. Assess differences in titling practices (official, parenthetical, organizational; how to create in automated system).
- Q. Explain how to conduct desk audit.
- R. Discuss importance of Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) determinations.
- S. Describe the classification appeal process.
- T. Recognize concept of position management.
- U. Determine issues relevant to position management, e.g., alignment to strategic plan; effect and impact of grade control; establish temporary and interim positions, entry-level career ladder positions; relationship to budget and cost-effective measures; advice and guidance to management; development of alternatives.

### ***Gain Knowledge of Federal Wage Job Grading System***

- V. Demonstrate FWS classification process and grade level determinations.
- W. Discuss formats and factors of FWS PDs.
- X. Recognize significance of Key Ranking Jobs to FWS.
- Y. Differentiate FWS positions, e.g., supervisory, leader, intermediate, helper inspector, and production facilitator.
- Z. Explain FWS job classification standards.
- AA. Recognize significance and purpose of Federal Wage Survey.

### ***Learning Activities***

#### ***Read/Study***

- *The Classifier's Handbook; Introduction to the GS Position Classification Standards; Handbook of Occupational Groups & Families; Introduction to the Federal Wage System Job Grading Standards; Federal Wage System Grading Guide for Supervisors.*
- Research documents on Federal Classification Home Page, [www.opm.gov/fedclass/index.htm](http://www.opm.gov/fedclass/index.htm), or obtain information on CD from Government Printing Office (GPO) Book Store, or servicing HR office.
- *USC, Title 5, Section 5100-5115.*

- Grade level definitions in law.
- *Code of Federal Regulations (5 CFR 511 (GS) and Part 532 (FWS))*.
- VA policies for classification and position management, *VA Directives and Handbooks 5001 and 5003*; Human Resources Management Letters (HRMLs), Personnel Information Bulletins (PIBs), other references.
- *5 CFR 551, Pay Administration under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)*.
- Review training facility's files of classification actions, evaluation reports and classification appeals.

## **Actions**

- Work with HR professional staff to complete on-the-job activities, e.g., classify PD's in FES and narrative format; write evaluation reports, classify lead and supervisory positions; conduct desk audits.
- Visit NCA national cemetery to observe FWS workers performing work.
- Audit wage grade positions, classify FWS PDs.
- Visit local DOD/VA host facility and attend FWS committee meetings. Attend reorganization meeting with senior HR specialist.
- Conduct segment of the annual classification maintenance review.
- Participate in classification consistency review with HR specialist.
- Prepare and present classification segment for New Employee Orientation Program.
- Fill in the Optional Form 8 (OF-8) (cover page for GS and FWS PDs).
- If available, use an automated classification system, to prepare and classify a PD for GS-5, Secretary (Typing).
- Prepare article for station newsletter about implementation of new FWS classification standard.
- Prepare letter about downgrading an employee's position with an explanation of appeal procedures.
- Assist supervisors by writing position descriptions using various formats, e.g., FES, GS narrative, FWS.

- Participate in discussions with line officials concerning classification problems.

**\*Training assignment in the position classification function should precede assignment in the staffing function.**

**Formal Training:** Take course, “VA Classification,” or “Basic Position Classification,” USDA Graduate School (10 days) or comparable course; complete National Independent Study Center (NISC) correspondence course, “Position Classification: An Introduction.”

**Training Methods:** Discussion, required reading, on-the-job training, familiarization tours, formal training courses and self-study correspondence courses.

**Evaluation:** Performance and successful course completion.



**Processing and Records (4 Weeks)*****Learning Objectives***

- A. Discuss processing personnel actions.
- B. Compute service computation dates (SCD) for creditable service.
- C. Discuss the basic rules for Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FEGLI), Federal Employee's Group Health Benefits (FEHB), Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) and Retirement Programs
- D. Explain the accession coding for all types of appointments
- E. Process change actions.
- F. Recognize impact of incorrect coding on employee record.
- G. Process actions for Title 38 physicians and dentists.
- H. Process physician and dentist Special Pay.
- I. Reproduce a Official Personnel Folder (OPF)

***Learning Activities******Read/Study***

- MP-6, Part V, Supp. 1.5, Chapters 1-3
- Guide to Processing Personnel Actions, Introduction  
<http://www.opm.gov/feddata/gppa/gppa.htm>
- Guide to Personnel Record Keeping, Introduction  
<http://www.opm.gov/feddata/recguide.pdf>

***Actions***

1. Processing Personnel Actions beginning with SF-52  
(Using the MP-6, Part V, Supp. 1.5, PAID Coding Manual)  
Process the following transactions:
  - Accessions
  - Determining SCDs
  - Pay Changes
  - Pay Adjustments
  - Leave Without Pay (LWOP) and Return to Duty (RTD)
  - Title 38
  - Physicians and Dentists Special Pay

- Awards
  - Corrections and Cancellations
  - Separations
  - Retirements
  - Transfers
2. New Employee Benefits Information
    - Processing new employees
  3. PAID System Operations
    - On-line Data Entry (OLDE) Navigation
    - Coding transactions into Personnel Automated Integrated Data (PAID)
    - Roger Software Development (RSD) Review and verification of PAID messages
    - Reports (P-31A, P-59, etc)
  4. Using the Guide to Processing Personnel Actions
  5. Guide to Personnel Record Keeping
    - a. Filing SF-50B and other personnel documents
    - b. Permanent and temporary files
      - Official Personnel Folder (OPF)
      - Employee Medical Folder (EMF)
      - Merged Employee Record Folder (MERF)

## ***References***

- MP-6, Part V, Supp. No. 1.5 and Bulletins  
<http://vaww.va.gov/Ohrm/PAIDBulletin/hrmpaid.htm>
- Guide to Personnel Record Keeping
- Guide to Processing Personnel Actions
- Guide to Central Personnel Data File

***Formal Training:*** Take “Processing Personnel Actions,” #STAF7003D-C22, (5 days) and self-study course, “Calculating Service Computation Dates,” #PROC7002N-C32, through USDA Graduate School, or comparable vendor

Following training is recommended at a later point in the intern's training schedule (if time permits) PAID/OLDE training, <http://vaww.va.gov/Ohrm/PAIDBulletin/WIST2002/WIST02-20.doc>

**Training Methods:** *Discussion, reading, on-the-job training, formal training courses.*

**Evaluation:** Performance and successful course completion.

## **Staffing and Affirmative Employment Rotation (12 weeks)**

### ***Learning Objectives***

#### **General Staffing and EEO**

- A. Discuss concept of non-discrimination in employment.
- B. Define VA's affirmative action program.
- C. Describe Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program 1 (FEORP).
- D. Identify Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection procedures.
- E. Explain the concept of merit principles.
- F. Determine the meaning of prohibited personnel practices.
- G. Recognize the special emphasis programs.
- H. Screen applicants for basic qualifications by applying appropriate qualification standards.
- I. Apply Veterans Preference for Title 5.
- J. Determine when Veterans Preference might be applied for a Title 38 applicant.
- K. Demonstrate appropriate rating and ranking procedures for internal placement actions.
- L. State what documentation is needed to support appointment and promotion actions.
- M. Explain succession planning and how it relates to strategic planning within VA.
- N. Identify goals of special emphasis programs, e.g., hiring disabled veterans and handicapped employees and know appropriate recruitment sources and authorities.

#### **Title 5 Staffing**

- O. Discuss Title 5 staffing policies and regulations.
- P. Recognize Title 5 appointing authorities.

- Q. Describe the different ways to fill Title 5 positions using external recruitment methods, e.g., OPM registers, employee transfers, reinstatement eligible employees.
- R. Demonstrate recruiting and appointment procedures using competitive Title 5.
- S. Differentiate between competitive and non- competitive title 5 appointments.
- T. Explain differences between internal and external recruitment methods.
- U. Discuss when accretion of duties' promotions are appropriate/inappropriate.
- V. Illustrate job analysis process.
- W. List VA-specific delegated staffing and placement authorities, e.g., Schedule B for research positions.
- X. Discuss Priority Placement Programs and the Career Transition Assistance Program (CTAP).
- Y. Explain probationary period requirements, follow-up, and separation during probationary period.
- Z. Identify the purpose of Delegated Examining Unit (DEU).
- AA. Apply the "rule of three."
- BB. Discuss process and procedures to conduct a Reduction-In-Force (RIF).

## **Title 38 Staffing**

- CC. Describe the purpose of Title 38 personnel system.
- DD. Recognize concepts and differences of "rank-in-person" and "rank-in-position."
- EE. Explain different Title 38 appointing authorities including without compensation (WOC), fee-basis authorities.
- FF. Describe the documentation process for J-1 visa requests for non-a citizens.
- GG. Complete professional credentials verification.
- HH. Discuss purpose of professional standards boards.
- II. Participate in advising professional standards boards.
- JJ. Explain advancement procedures for the Title 38 and hybrid Title 38 occupations.
- KK. Discuss probationary period requirements, follow-up, and separation during probationary period.

## ***Learning Activities***

### ***Read/Study***

- Chapters and Sections in *Title 5, USC* pertaining to employment and retention, e.g., *Chapters 31-35*.
- *Code of Federal Regulations (5 CFR, Parts 250, 293, 297, 300-362, 720, 731)*
- Staffing materials and recommended learning methods, page 32, *HR Competencies – A Resource Guide for HR Professionals*  
<http://vawww.va.gov/ohrm/HRLibrary/HRLibrary.htm>
- Read staffing-related materials at the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) web site, [www.worldwidehr.hq.dla.mil/index/index.htm](http://www.worldwidehr.hq.dla.mil/index/index.htm)
- Merit promotion information on bargaining unit positions in VA AFGE Master Agreement and other labor contracts.
- Facility's affirmative action plan.
- *Title 38, USC, Chapters 73 and 74*.
- Merit System Protection Board Study (MSPB), *The Title 38 Personnel System in the Department of Veterans Affairs: An Alternate Approach, April 1991*.
- Review *VA Directives and Handbooks 5005 and 5383*
- Review information available on  
<http://vawww.va.gov/ohrm/SiteDir.htm>
- Review information available on Office of Diversity Management and Equal Employment Opportunity web site, [www.va.gov/dmceo](http://www.va.gov/dmceo)

### ***Actions (General Staffing and EEO)***

- Attend job fairs and participate in recruiting trips, e.g., visit local college campus, visit state employment service.
- Write recruitment advertisement for scientific position to be placed in professional journal.
- Meet with EEO Program Manager, EEO Advisory Committee and Special Emphasis Program Managers to discuss FEORP activities.
- Discuss with preceptor/supervisor ways to recruit minority and handicapped applicants.

### ***Actions (Title 5)***

- Work with senior Human Resources Specialist to develop distance learning training initiative, e.g., satellite broadcast on process and procedures of different recruitment methods.
- Role play with a senior HR Specialist (Staffing & Recruitment) employment interviewing techniques and explain:
  - Federal hiring process
  - Federal job application procedures
  - Current employment opportunities in VBA
  - Job opportunities in VA
- Attend training class for managers on conducting Performance Based Interviews (PBIs).
- Participate in meeting to advise manager about staffing issues in conjunction with proposed reorganization.
- Perform job analysis for an Information Technology Specialist position to determine rating and ranking factors.
- Develop rating factors.
- Conduct a rating and ranking panel for GS and wage grade positions.
- Determine eligibility of job applicants under different Title 5 appointment authorities.
- Prepare merit promotion vacancy announcement.
- Post vacancy announcement on OPM web site (USA Jobs).
- Participate in performance-based interview.
- Prepare merit promotion certificate.
- Develop list of qualified applicants.
- Develop advertisement to recruit non-status applicants.
- Use RIF Runner software.
- Write Reduction-in-Force notice.

### ***Actions (Title 38)***

- Review qualification standards and determine basic eligibility for Title 38 appointments for physician, physician assistant, registered nurse, and nurse-anesthetist.
- Verify physician's medical specialty board certification, i.e., visit facility library/resources learning center to review

Compendium of Medical Specialists or perform on-line verification.

- Detail to Quality Management Office or Office of Chief of Staff, contact state licensing authority and certifying body to verify physicians' credentials, e.g., education, training, residencies, internships, and fellowships.
- Attend Nursing & Physician Professional Standards Board meeting.
- Meet with Chief of Staff or his/her Special Assistant at host facility and discuss proficiency rating system.
- Work with senior Human Resources Management Specialist and clinical managers to develop staff adjustment plan.
- Read functional statements and position descriptions to develop an understanding of the differences in function and responsibilities of Chief of Staff and Associate Medical Center Director and their subordinate organizations.
- Write advertisements for nursing professional journal to recruit chief nurse to manage long-term care facility and staff nurse for locked psychiatric ward.

**Formal Training:** Take, "Basic Staffing and Placement, " (5 days) and "Processing Personnel Actions," (5 days), USDA Graduate School, or comparable courses.

Take online course, "Title 38 Personnel Management Development Series," and seminar, "Title 38 Personnel Management" (3 days), or comparable course sponsored by VA Central Office.

**Training Methods:** Discussion, reading, on-the-job training, formal training courses.

**Evaluation:** Performance and successful course completion.



**Pay Administration- Title 5 and Title 38 (12 weeks)*****Learning Objectives*****General Pay Administration (Title 5)**

- A. Discuss the factors to consider when setting pay on initial appointment.
- B. Set pay for an employee with no previous Federal service:
  - Appointment at step 1
  - Superior qualifications appointment
  - Recruitment bonus
- C. Set pay for employees with previous Federal service:
  - Understand the maximum payable rate rule (highest previous rate)
  - Learn when a recruitment bonus is/is not appropriate to use
- D. Set pay for current employees:
  - Promoted
  - On reassignment
  - Demoted with:
    - Highest previous rate
    - Grade and/or pay retention
    - With within-grade increases
    - With relocation bonus
    - With retention allowance
- E. Set pay for employees separated:
  - With lump-sum annual leave payments
  - With severance pay
- F. Explain what establishes eligibility for a within-grade increase.
- G. Recognize the different waiting periods for within-grade step increases
- H. Recognize the different scenarios when a waiting period begins
- I. Explain the meaning of an “equivalent increase”
- J. Compute pay

- K. Set pay on initial appointment for a FWS job.
- L. Explain the impact of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) on pay determinations.
- M. Discuss premium pay for GS and FWS employees.
- N. Recognize the different pay flexibilities available to VA for hard-to-fill positions.

### ***Title 38 (Physicians and Dentists)***

- O. Explain the purpose of special pay.
- P. Determine when a special pay agreement is required.
- Q. Discuss the meanings of the different special pay components.
- R. Explain what special pay components a particular physician or dentist might be entitled to receive.
- S. Describe the purpose and composition of a physician professional standards board.
- T. Describe which special pay components are discretionary and which are mandatory.
- U. Identify the certifying bodies VA recognizes for the Board Certification component of special pay.
- V. Compute a physician's total pay (base pay plus special pay).
- W. Explain the difference between an allopathic and osteopathic physician.
- X. List the different medical scarce specialties.
- Y. Discuss who the approving officials for physicians and dentists special pay are.
- Z. Discuss "pay cap."
- AA. Determine if the pay cap refers to part-times physicians.
- BB. Discuss a waiver of refund liability.
- CC. Identify who must approve a waiver.
- DD. Describe what is a staffing adjustment.
- EE. Recognize significance of an involuntary action for waiver of special pay refund liability.
- FF. Differentiate between fellows, residents, and attendings.
- GG. Discuss why physicians paid under a fee basis arrangement are not entitled to special pay.

### ***Title 38 (Nurse Locality Pay)***

- HH. Explain the purpose of nurse locality pay and categories of nurses covered.
- II. Describe the differences between a licensed practical nurse, registered nurse, nurse anesthetist, head nurse, nurse practitioner, and clinical nurse specialist.
- JJ. Explain how to set beginning rates of pay for nurses covered by LPS.
- KK. Describe the meaning of local labor market and how to conduct a local salary survey.
- LL. Identify when the local labor market area can be expanded.
- MM. Recognize when separate salary schedules may be established.
- NN. Discuss the different waiting periods for periodic step increases.
- OO. Explain the meaning of advanced practice nursing.
- PP. Describe when it is appropriate to set higher rates of pay for a nurse with specialized skills.
- QQ. Identify the purpose of a nurse professional standards board.
- RR. Discuss the composition of a nurse standards board.
- SS. List different types of premium pay for nurses and the hybrid occupations.

## ***Learning Activities***

### ***Read/Study:***

- 5 USC, Chapter 53, Pay Rates and Systems
- 5 USC, Chapter 55, Pay Administration
- 38 USC, Chapter 74, Subchapter 1-Appointments
- 38 USC, Chapter 74, Subchapter III-Special Pay for Physicians and Dentists
- 38 USC, Chapter 74, Subchapter IV –Pay for Nurses and Other Health Care Personnel
- 5 CFR, Part 530, Pay Rates and Systems (General); Subpart B Aggregate Limitation on Pay; Subpart C, Special Salary Rate Schedules for Recruitment and Retention

- 5 CFR, Part 531, Pay Under the General Schedule; Subpart B-Determining Rate of Basic Pay; Subpart C-Special Pay Adjustments for Law Enforcement Officers; Subpart D-Within-Grade Increases;
- Subpart E-Quality Step Increases; Subpart F-Locality-Based Comparability Payments; Subpart G-Continued Rates of Pay
- 5 CFR, Part 532-Prevailing Rate Systems
- 5 CFR, Part 534-Pay Under Other Systems
- 5 CFR, Part 536-Pay and Grade Retention
- 5 CFR, Part 550-Pay Administration (General); Subpart A-Premium Pay; Subpart B-Advances in Pay; Subpart E-Pay From More Than One Position; Subpart H-Back Pay; Subpart L-Lump-Sum Payment for Accumulated and Accrued Annual Leave
- VA Directive and Handbook 5007, Pay Administration, Parts II-IX, Chapters 2-12, and Appendices
- VA Directive and Handbook 5007, Pay Administration, Nurse Locality Pay, Part X, Chapters 1-7, and Appendices
- VA Directive and Handbook 5007, Pay Administration, Purchase and Hire Wage Rates, Part VIII, Chapter 13; and Appendices.
- [http://vaww.va.gov/ohrm/Pay/Pay\\_HOME.htm](http://vaww.va.gov/ohrm/Pay/Pay_HOME.htm)
- Review Comptroller General decisions on pay issues
- <http://www.opm.gov/oca>
- *Facts About the Federal Wage System*,  
<http://www.opm.gov/oca/pay/htm/fwsfact.htm>
- Classification and Compensation Society,  
[www.classandcomp.org](http://www.classandcomp.org)

## **Actions**

### **General Pay Administration (Title 5)**

- Set the pay of a new employee hired at a VBA Regional Office as a Secretary (Typing), GS-5 with no previous Federal service.
- With a senior HR Specialist calculate the pay of a GS-11 Medical Technologist who will receive a 25 percent recruitment bonus.

- Meet with a senior HR Specialist (Classification) and discuss entitlement of grade and/or pay retention for an employee downgraded as a result of a reclassification.
- Using OHRM's intranet web site, research the Pay Administration section to find an example of applying the Highest Previous Rate (HPR) Rule for a newly hired GS-7 Accountant, who was formerly a GS-7 Accounting Technician.
- Attend a meeting concerning a reorganization.
- Visit the Chief, Staffing Section and/or Chief, Classification & Compensation to determine whether any Title 5 special salary rates have been authorized by OPM for occupations at your station.
- During the rotation to Pay Administration, request a detail to Central Office Pay Administration coincident with implementation of the annual pay increase.
- Compute the hourly rate of a Human Resources Specialist (Trainee), GS-7, step 1; the daily rate; and the weekly rate (40 hours).

### **Special Pay for Physicians and Dentists (Title 38)**

- Explain the purpose of special pay to a senior HR Specialist and locate the sections in the statute that pertain to special pay for physicians and dentists, respectively.
- Compute the total compensation of the following physicians/dentists at your facility: Chief of Staff, Chief, Dental Service, part-time (.5) cardiologist, and full-time staff general surgeon.
- Accompany a senior HR Specialist to a professional standards board meeting. The senior specialist will provide advice and answer questions about pay and benefit entitlements for the new physicians.
- A physician at your station will have a change in tenure that will cause his/her total compensation to exceed the current pay cap. Determine whether Central Office approval is required and prepare the request for approval (if needed).
- Prepare a waiver of special pay refund liability for approval of the VISN Director.

- Access the OHRM intranet web page on Pay Administration, determine if a physician board certified in Geriatric Medicine is eligible for the Board Certification component of special pay.

### **Nurse Locality Pay (Title 38)**

- Explain why nurse locality pay was implemented in VA and the occupations it covers.
- Participate in a nurse locality salary survey as a data collector (or review survey data).
- Work with a senior HR Specialist to establish nurse pay schedules based on results of the local salary surveys.
- Research documents at the facility to define the local labor market area.
- Explain the categories of nurses that separate salary schedules can be established.
- Attend a local nurse professional standards board.
- Compute the rate of pay of a staff nurse transferring to a medical facility where the gaining station has a lower rate of pay.

**Formal Training:** Take online course, “Title 38 Personnel Management Development Series,” and Title 38 Personnel Management” (3 days), or comparable course sponsored by VA Central Office.

**Training Methods:** Discussion, reading, on-the-job training, formal training courses.

**Evaluation:** Performance and successful completion.

**Employee Relations (Title 5 and Title 38) (16 weeks)**

*In some locations the modules in Employee Relations may also include Labor Relations, Performance Management and Employee Benefits. In that case the rotation should equal the sum total of each of the individuals timeframes listed in this guide.*

**Learning Objectives**

- A. Explain the difference between conduct and performance.
- B. Discuss the concept of progressive disciplinary action.
- C. Discuss the concept of the corrective, rather than punitive, nature of disciplinary action.
- D. Conduct an effective fact-finding/investigation of misconduct allegations.
- E. Describe the procedures for Administrative Boards of Investigation.
- F. Gather appropriate documentation and evidence in support of disciplinary actions.
- G. Demonstrate effective use of verbal and written counseling techniques.
- H. Illustrate how to effect separations of probationary and temporary employees.
- I. Describe how to effect separations of part-time Title 38 employees.
- J. List the various forms of misconduct and the relative seriousness of each.
- K. List the various types of disciplinary actions.
- L. Identify procedural entitlements afforded in the disciplinary process.
- M. Assemble evidence files for disciplinary actions.
- N. Draft appropriate charges for disciplinary and adverse actions.
- O. Explain how to use the penalty guide.
- P. Identify and evaluate mitigating and aggravating circumstances surrounding misconduct issues.



- Q. Define “professional conduct or competence” as applied to Title 38 disciplinary and adverse actions.
- R. Discuss the 12 Douglas Factors and how they apply to adverse action cases.
- S. Describe the appropriate use of Last Change Agreements and Abeyance Agreements.
- T. Explain the concept of “nexus” especially as related to off-duty misconduct issues.
- U. Recognize the “crime provision” and appropriate use of indefinite suspension.
- V. Describe the various avenues of appeal, and the actions for which each avenue applies.
- W. Discuss the concept of “firm choice” and when to refer employees to Employee Assistance Program.
- X. Describe how to address employee problems with alcohol or other substance abuse.
- Y. Demonstrate the provision of the Drug Free Workplace program with regard to reasonable suspicion testing.
- Z. Explain the concept of reasonable accommodation with regard to non-work-related conditions, both mental and physical.
- AA. Describe the circumstances under which an employee may be asked to provide medical information, or submit to a medical examination.
- BB. Discuss how adverse action procedures may be used for medical disqualification.
- CC. Address workplace violence concerns and prevention.
- DD. Address sexual harassment concerns and prevention.
- EE. Explain the Hatch Act and federal ethics regulations.
- FF. Discuss “whistleblower” protections and procedures.
- GG. Describe the various types of leave available and the appropriate use of each.
- HH. Explain the provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act, and the Federal Employees Family-Friendly Leave Act.
- II. Explain the provisions of the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program.
- JJ. Review leave usage records and how to identify possible leave abuse.
- KK. Discuss the circumstances under which an employee may be placed on sick leave restriction.



- LL. Discuss the circumstances under which an employee may be charged Absent Without Leave (AWOL).
- MM. Address issues of extended unexcused absence.
- NN. Explain alternative discipline, e.g., letters in lieu of, and where alternative discipline may be appropriate.

## ***Learning Activities***

### ***Actions***

- Perform on-line case law research using online services, e.g., Personnet, Cyberfeds, [www.law.cornell.edu/](http://www.law.cornell.edu/)
- Review supporting documentation for a disciplinary action case, prepare recommendation of appropriate penalty, and draft charges for a proposed action.
- Assemble a complete evidence file for a disciplinary action.
- Attend an oral reply meeting for an employee who has received notice of a proposed action.
- Prepare an analysis of the Douglas Factors for an adverse action case.
- Meet with a Regional Counsel attorney to discuss the roles of Regional Counsel and Human Resources in an appeal process.
- Assist agency representatives in preparing witnesses for MSPB and/or EEOC hearings.
- Meet with the local EEO Program Manager to discuss the EEO discrimination complaints process.

### ***Read/Study***

- *VA Directive and Handbook 5021*, Employee/Management Relations
- *VA Directive and Handbook 5011*, Hours of Duty and Leave
- *AFGE Master Agreement* articles, Discipline and Adverse Actions, Investigations, Employee Assistance Program, and Time and Leave
- Local bargaining unit agreement articles, Disciplinary Actions, Leave, and Employee Assistance Programs.
- Local station policies on disciplinary actions, Leave, Employee Assistance Programs, and Reasonable Accommodation.

- Current edition of *A Guide to Merit Systems Protection Board Law and Practice*, Peter Broida, Dewey Publications
- 5 CFR Part 2635 concerning standards of ethical conduct for employees of the executive branch.
- Review employee relations-related material available on the following websites:
  - Merit Systems Protection Board: [www.mspb.gov](http://www.mspb.gov)
  - Office of Personnel Management: [www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov)
  - Office of Government Ethics: [www.usoge.gov](http://www.usoge.gov)
  - Office of Special Counsel: [www.osc.gov](http://www.osc.gov)
  - Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: [www.eeoc.gov](http://www.eeoc.gov)
  - VA Office of Resolution Management: <http://vaww.va.gov/orp>
  - VA Office of Human Resources Management: <http://vaww.va.gov/ohrm>

**Formal Training:** Take “Employee Relations for Practitioners,” or comparable course, through FPPI Communications, Inc. (3 days) or USDA Graduate School.

**Training Methods:** Discussion, reading, on-the-job training, formal training courses.

**Evaluation:** Performance and successful course completion.

**Labor Relations (Title 5 and Title 38) (8 weeks)*****Learning Objectives***

- A. Explain Labor Management Relations (LMR) statute, regulations, and basic case law.
- B. Discuss national agreements and local supplements at specific stations.
- C. Define the roles, obligations, and responsibilities of the parties, e.g., what is a supervisor? How should he or she involve the union? What are the rights and responsibilities of union officials?
- D. Describe the functions of third parties, role of the courts, use of alternate dispute resolution (ADR).
- E. Recognize the differences between unfair labor practices (ULP's), grievances, and arbitration.
- F. Identify the interest based bargaining (IBB) process versus traditional negotiations; substantive versus impact and implementation; appropriate arrangement bargaining; local bargaining versus national bargaining.
- G. Describe the role of the union.
- H. Recognize how unions are structured (within VA and the VA Council)
- I. Explain the role of professional organizations
- J. Discuss the election process (union and unit)
- K. Illustrate different LMR obligations, distinctions, and implications when dealing with Title 5 and Title 38 employees and employees in Hybrid occupations, for example:
  - Hybrids (issues covering appointment, advancement and pay)
  - Title 38 (issues not subject to collective bargaining under 38 USC 7422--professional conduct, competence, peer review and matters relating to pay).

## **Learning Activities**

### **Read/Study:**

- *Federal Labor Relations Statute*, 5 USC, Chapter 71.
- Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) rules and regulations,
- 5 CFR, Chapter XIV.
- OPM publication, *Negotiability Determinations by the Federal Labor Relations Authority*.
- OPM publication, *Index of Decisions, Federal Service Impasse Panel (FSIP)*.
- Text on arbitration, *How Arbitration Works*. Elkouri and Elkouri.
- Three master agreements—*American Federal of Government Employees (AFGE)*; *National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE)*, and *National Association of Government Employees (NAGE)*.
- Memoranda of Understanding with national unions.

### **Actions:**

- Review the annual publication, *A Guide to Federal Labor Relations Authority Law and Practice*. Peter Broida.
- Review material on FLRA web site, <http://flra.gov>.
- Visit other facilities within the VISN, MISN, SDN, to discuss differences in labor management relationships.
- If possible, visit Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) and Federal Mediation Conciliation Service (FMCS).
- Discuss importance of relationship building with preceptor.
- Shadow a more experienced HR Specialist (Labor Relations).
- Research LMR laws (including case law from FLRA and courts) regulations and agency policy on a specific issue.
- Demonstrate how to find current LMR decisions.
- Analyze and interpret contract language and law to provide advice on a labor relation's issue.
- Review a proposed agency/medical center policy to determine the extent of labor relations obligation.
- Prepare a written response to a ULP or grievance.
- Observe arbitration, if possible.

- Assist in the preparation for a negotiation with union officials.
- Participate in a negotiation.

**Formal Training:** There are basic training courses given in several areas of Labor Management Relations relating to mediation, ADR, negotiations and basic labor management relations. These vendors include Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, USDA Graduate School, and Federal Personnel Management Institute.

**Training Methods:** Discussion, reading, on-the-job training, formal training courses.

**Evaluation:** Performance and successful course completion.

**Performance Management Rotation (4 weeks)*****Learning Objectives***

- A. Explain the VA's performance management system.
- B. Differentiate Title 5 and Title 38 performance management systems.
- C. Describe the basic requirements for evaluating performance for both Title 5 and Title 38 employees.
- D. Illustrate how to develop performance standards through job analysis that support organizational goals.
- E. Explain how to establish a Disciplinary Appeals Board (DAB) for Title 38 professional conduct and competence issues.
- F. Discuss the regulations that govern the operation of the proficiency rating system or performance management system applicable to different Title 38 occupations.
- G. Describe the process for dealing with poor performance, e.g., counseling and developing a performance improvement plan (PIP).
- H. Explain the issues involved in taking performance-based actions under 5 CFR, Section 752, Adverse Actions.
- I. Assist with the Incentive Awards Program and learn the different types of awards for employee recognition and steps for processing them.

***Learning Activities******Read/Study***

- *5 CFR, Part 430, Performance Management.*
- *5 CFR, Part 432, Performance Based Reduction in Grade and Removal Actions.*
- *5 CFR, Part 451, Awards.*
- *Title 5 and Title 38, VA Directive and Handbook 5013, Performance Management System.*
- *Title 5 and Title 38, VA Directive and Handbook 5017, Employee Recognition and Awards.*

- *Title 5, Sections 5430 and 5451.*
- *5 CFR, Part 451, Awards.*
- Read section in local union contract on performance appraisal system and discuss with union official at host facility.

### **Actions:**

- View OPM CD ROM, *“Addressing and Resolving Poor Performance.”*
- Attend consulting session led by senior HR Specialist providing advice on how to develop a plan.
- Research and study history files for sample performance improvement plans (PIPs), counseling memorandum, and performance standards.
- Work with preceptor or supervisor of record to develop performance standards and elements for intern’s position.
- Prepare a warning notice of unacceptable performance and develop a PIP.
- Research and review information on performance management in the Performance Management Reference Room at <http://vaww.va.gov/ohrm/Performance/PMReference.htm>
- Research different performance management methods, e.g., 360 degree evaluation and peer review, and prepare pros/cons paper for discussion and review with preceptor or senior HR Specialist.
- Review performance management material at Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) web site [www.mspb.gov](http://www.mspb.gov)
- Prepare and present segment on performance evaluation at New Employee Orientation.
- Check technical accuracy of performance appraisal documents.
- Compile data for incentive awards report to OPM.
- Work with supervisor to prepare recommendation for quality increase and performance award.
- Review incentive awards nominations and process incentive award.
- Attend consulting (training) session for new rating official on the proficiency rating system.
- Work with host HR officials to plan Awards Program for facility employees.

- Draft policy.

***Training Methods:*** Reading, discussion, and complete on-the-job work assignments.

***Evaluation:*** Performance discussed with HR staff and preceptor.



**Training and Development (4 weeks)*****Learning Objectives******Theory and Policy***

- A. Discuss principles and techniques of adult learning (andragogy)
- B. Describe ways High Performance Development Model (HPDM) components and core competencies guide educational needs of employees and can be integrated into employee learning
- C. Demonstrate how training regulations in 5 CFR chapters 410 and 412 and VA training policy shape educational needs and learning

***Needs Assessment and Evaluation***

- D. Describe ways to determine educational needs and quantify through assessment techniques
- E. List strategies to evaluate learning outcomes
- F. Discuss return on investment (ROI) analysis and its use in evaluating education and training

***Training***

- G. List different learning styles and the type of training modalities suitable for each
- H. Describe how different training modalities can be used and adapted to meet different learning needs
- I. Describe principles of curriculum development
- J. Describe ways to write measurable learning objectives
- K. Describe training methods appropriate to different contents and audiences
- L. Describe creative ways to present material that has been provided to HR staff for presentation to facility staff
- M. Demonstrate use of learning management systems (LMS)-- local, such as TEMPO, and national, such as the enterprise level LMS

## ***Resources***

- N. Demonstrate familiarity with different training materials/resources available to VA staff, such as Learning Maps, Microworld simulations, videos, self-studies, web-based courses
- O. Demonstrate ability to access various learning resources, including national government and VA resources (e.g., VA Employee Education System (EES) web site and Catalog, HPDM web site, VAKN Satellite Schedule, OPM training web page and Training Handbook, various education related web pages across VA OPM).

## ***Learning Activities***

### ***Actions:***

- Identify at least two learning needs of the organization
- Develop a class/activity to meet one need, including:
  - Measurable learning objectives
  - Curriculum/syllabus, targeting material to audience
  - Blend satellite and online learning activities into the overall curriculum
  - Materials and handouts
  - Usable, creative and appropriate audiovisuals, if needed
  - Evaluation methods (long- and short-term) appropriate to content and audience
- Effectively publicize the training
- Teach the class, using training methods appropriate to content, audience, and adult learning needs, and styles, including online and satellite content
- Prepare a report about the class; present results about the class to preceptor and management official(s)
- Use non-class room resources to meet one need, including:
  - Identify resources
  - Publicize resources
  - Evaluate use

## ***Read/Study:***

- King, Stephen, King, Marsha, Rothwell, William. *The Complete Guide to Training Delivery: A Competency-Based Approach*. New York: AMACOM (division of American Management Association), 2001.
- Mager, Robert. *Preparing Instructional Objectives*. Belmont, CA, David Lake, 1984.
- Senge, Peter M. *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. New York: Doubleday, 1990.
- Senge, Peter M, Kleiner, Art; Roberts, Charlotte, Ross, Richard, Smith, Bryan. *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization*. New York: Doubleday, 1994.
- Stolovitch, Harold D, Keeps, Erica J, editors, *Handbook of Human Performance Technology: Improving Individual and Organizational Performance Worldwide*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 1999.

**Benefits & Leave Rotation (8 weeks)*****Learning Objectives***

- A. Explain application of federal employee benefits programs (e.g., FEHB, FEGLI, TSP, CSRS, FERS, long-term care).
- B. Apply various federal leave programs (e.g., sick leave, annual leave, leave transfer, organ donor leave, FMLA, FFFLA).
- C. Complete benefits forms.
- D. Assist in counseling managers and employees regarding benefits and leave programs.
- E. Explain benefits program resource materials.
- F. Coordinate and provide information for benefits open seasons.
- G. Provide data and reports in response to requests for information from various sources (e.g., OHRM, OPM, GAO).
- H. Apply various methods of staying abreast of changes in benefits program laws and regulations (e.g., internet, newsletters).
- I. Interpret changes in benefits laws, regulations, and program guidance and develop corresponding changes, as needed, in internal policy statements and standard operating procedures.

***Learning Activities******Read/Study:***

- 5 U.S.C., Chapters 83-85, 87, 89, and 90
- 5 CFR, Part 831, Retirement
- 5 CFR, Part 837, Reemployment of annuitants
- 5 CFR, Part 838, Court orders affecting retirement benefits
- 5 CFR, Parts 841-846, Federal Employees Retirement System
- 5 CFR, Part 847, Elections of retirement coverage by current and former employees of non-appropriated fund instrumentalities
- 5 CFR, Part 870, Federal Employees Group Life Insurance Program
- 5 CFR, Part 890, Federal Employees Health Benefits Program
- 5 CFR, Part 891, Retired Federal employees health benefits

- 5 CFR, Part 892, Federal flexible benefits plan: pre-tax payment of health benefits premiums
- 5 CFR, Part 1600, Thrift Savings Plan
- VA Directive 5009, Employee Benefits
- OPM Operating Manual, “CSRS and FERS Handbook for Personnel and Payroll Offices”
- OPM Operating Manual, “The Federal Employees Health Benefits Program Handbook: A Handbook for Enrollees and Employing Offices”
- OPM Operating Manual, “The Federal Employees Group Life Insurance Handbook: A Handbook for Employees, Annuitants, Compensationers, and Employing Offices”
- OPM Benefits Administration Letters
- TSP Booklet, “Summary of the Thrift Savings Plan for Federal Employees”
- TSP Bulletins

***Actions:***

- Become familiar with the following benefits-related websites:
- OHRM Benefits: [vaww.va.gov/ohrm/Benefits/Benefits.htm](http://vaww.va.gov/ohrm/Benefits/Benefits.htm)
- OPM: [www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov)
- Thrift Savings Plan: [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov)
- Social Security: [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)
- Long-term Care Partners: [www.ltcfeds.com](http://www.ltcfeds.com)
- Attend formal training classes sponsored by VA, OPM, the Thrift Board, USDA Graduate School, etc.
- Develop and present benefits training for new employee orientation program.

***Training Methods:*** Reading, discussion, and complete on-the-job work assignments.

***Evaluation:*** Performance and discussion with HR staff.

**OWCP (2 weeks)*****Learning Objectives***

- A. Describe the basic concepts of the Office of Workers Compensation Program, to include traumatic injury, occupational illness, controversion, disputes, and burden of proof.
- B. Explain the employees' rights and responsibilities under the FECA.
- C. Acquire general understanding of supervisory and agency responsibilities.
- D. Acquire general understanding of the essential elements of the claim.
- E. Discuss the medical and financial benefits under OWCP.
- F. Identify the basic concepts of case management.

***Learning Activities******Actions:***

- Attend the 3-day training course offered at the OWCP District Offices.
- Attend the VA Best Practices in OWCP class, if available.
- Attend a Federal Workers Compensation conference.
- Visit the Employee Health Physician/Nurse Practitioner to discuss their perspective on OWCP at their facility.
- Attend facility Accident Review Board.
- Attend facility Environment of Care Committee.

***Read/Study:***

- Review CA-810.
- Review 5 USC 8101 et. Seq.
- Review 5 CFR 339 on medical qualifications.
- Review 20 CFR Part 10.
- Review local Labor Union agreement regarding OWCP.

**Formal Training:** 3-days rotation at OWCP District Office, attend VA Best Practices training course, and Federal Workers' Compensation Conference.

**Training Methods:** Discussion, required readings, formal training course.

**Evaluation:** Performance and course completion.

**Work Life (2 Weeks) Input Pending**



**STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING FOR RELOCATION**

I understand the purpose of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Human Resources Management (HRM) Intern Program is to develop qualified employees to meet the Department's needs in the field of human resources management requiring VA-specific HRM knowledge and skills. I, therefore, understand my initial assignment, upon successful completion of the program, will be made based on the needs of VA. I also understand that my first assignment may not be at the facility where I complete the internship. While my preferences will be considered to the extent possible, I will be expected to accept assignment at any VA facility where my services are needed. I hereby agree to accept such an assignment and the relocation it may require.

I further understand the human resources management internship is an integral part of a management development system designed to replenish, through the progressive development of career employees, the pool of qualified personnel for key administrative and management positions in the VA.

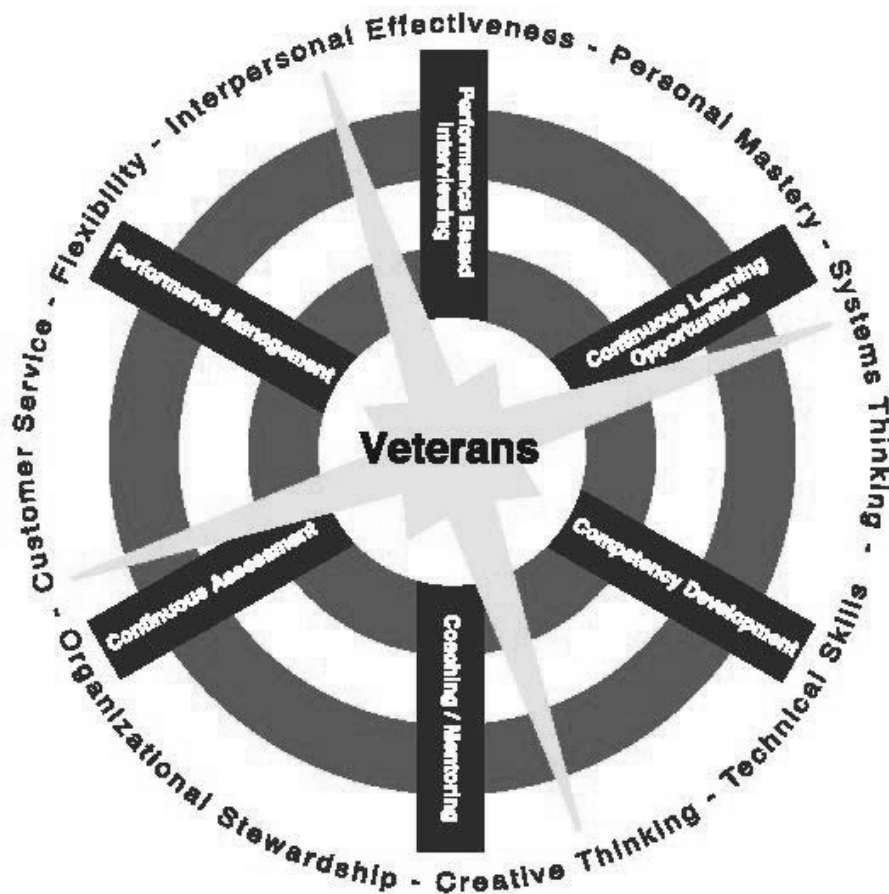
Signature of Intern: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**VHA HIGH PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT MODEL**

VHA determined that all employees must develop eight key competencies, regardless of occupation. These competencies that are shown in the High Performance Development Model (HPDM) in this Appendix have now been adopted by organizations across VA. HR practitioners should become familiar with the HPDM and the eight competencies it represents not only for their own personal benefit, but to develop programs and provide guidance for other staff, as well.

# High Performance Development Model



**Veterans Canteen Service Guide (4 weeks equivalent, incorporate with other rotations)*****INTRODUCTION:***

The information provided in this guide is to assist the Human Resource (HR) Management Intern in developing a better understanding of the Veterans Canteen Service (VCS). This guide provides a brief description of the mission and organization of the VCS, and outlines the unique characteristics associated with the various HR specializations, e.g., staffing, classification, employee relations, labor relations, performance management, pay administration, and Office of Workers Compensation Program (OWCP) within the VCS.

***MISSION:***

Public Law 636 of the 79th Congress established the VCS on August 8, 1946, as a self-sustaining entity within the Department of Veterans Affairs. Its primary mission is to make available to veterans of the armed forces, at reasonable prices, articles of merchandise and services essential to their comfort and well-being.

Unlike most of the VA, VCS salaries and operating expenses are paid from VCS earnings. Also, every dollar of income generated by VCS is returned to the VA Medical Centers to help improve the quality of life for Veteran patients, and to improve the quality of the workplace for VA employees. Since its inception, VCS's 3000+ employees have taken great personal and professional pride in serving the best customers in the nation -- the Veteran patients of the U.S. Armed Forces and those who provide for their care. This is accomplished by providing quality merchandise, food and vending, and related services at reasonable prices in VA Medical Centers nationwide. Today most people refer to the VCS as the "Canteen."

### **ORGANIZATION:**

Though statutorily designated as a “separate entity,” the VCS is in fact part of the Department organizationally aligned within the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). The VCS is operated under the direction of the Director, Veterans Canteen Service, who is appointed by the Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs and reports to the Deputy Under Secretary for Health. The Director and the VCS Chief Operating Officer (COO) are members of the Senior Executive Service (SES).

VCS Central Office: The VCS Central Office (VCSCO) is located in St. Louis, Missouri. VCSCO consists of the following offices: Office of the Director, VCS finance center, human resources, Equal Employment Opportunity, contract/purchasing, food and retail operations, and engineering. These entities design, implement, and monitor, policies, procedures, standards, and techniques to effect uniform standards for canteen operations nationwide.

Director, Field Operations: The Director, Field Operations (DFO) is responsible for day-to-day canteen field operations. The DFO reports to the COO and retains supervisory authority over fourteen (14) Regional Managers (RMs), who in-turn direct local canteen operating activities within their assigned geographical area.

Canteens: Canteen operations include a retail store, a cafeteria/food court, vending programs, and services such as: bed-side telephones, barbershops, optical shops, temporary retail concessions, etc. Canteen facilities are in 180 VHA Medical Centers and outpatient clinics nationwide.

### ***Learning Activities:***

- Visit the VCS web site at <http://vaww.aac.va.gov/vcscanteen/> and view the video entitled, “VCS: Proud to Serve Genuine American Heroes.” This web site also contains other informative information about the VCS.
- Visit VCS web site at <http://vaww.vcsco.med.va.gov/vcsco/homepg.htm> and review the Welcome to the VCS Orientation Guide.
- Review Title 38, U.S. C. Chapter 78, Veterans Canteen Service.
- Review VA Manual M-1, Part IV, Veterans Canteen Service Operations.
- Visit the Canteen at your local VA Medical Center.

### ***STAFFING AND RECRUITMENT:***

Statutory Authority: The VCS employs two personnel systems, Title 5 and Title 38, to accomplish its mission. Employees assigned to the VCSCO are Title 5 employees subject to all regulatory and legal provisions governing employees in the Competitive Service. VCS employees assigned as RMs, Canteen Chiefs, Assistant Chiefs, Associate Chiefs and all hourly rate employees are in the “Excepted Service” hired under the statutory provisions of Title 38, U.S.C., Chapter 78. These provisions allow the Director, VCS, to establish an independent personnel system and appoint and/or remove employees without regards to competitive provisions cited in Title 5. Additionally, VCS employees appointed under Title 38 provisions are not subject to Position Classification and Pay Administration (except for Craft and Trade positions) provisions cited under Title 5.

Though VCS is allowed many exceptions in its personnel system, the VCS is required to comply with provisions governing veterans’ preference in all aspects of employment. Additionally, all VCS employees are eligible to participate in Federal health/life insurance programs, Federal retirement programs, leave and/or other programs available to other VA employees.

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## APPENDIX E

Vacancy Announcements: There are no statutory or regulatory requirements that dictate the format for announcing vacant VCS positions. This notwithstanding, the VCS is subject to the Merit Principle concepts governing announcements.

For VCS management positions (Canteen Chiefs, RMs, Assistant Chief, and CO positions), VCSCO will announce and advertise the positions. Most announcements are distributed via e-mail and externally (e.g., newspaper ad) if necessary. Local hourly-rate VCS positions are announced (particularly higher-graded vacancies which represent a promotion potential for local VCS employees) in accordance with procedures cited in most bargaining unit agreements and/or local HR practices. Announcements may be executed by either the canteen chief or the HR office, whichever is the established practice.

Recruitment: If a canteen chief is posting a local vacancy announcement, he/she will also complete the recruiting process. Applicants will be interviewed and offers and selection made by the chief. An SF-52, Request for Personnel Action, will be subsequently sent to the HR office for processing. All canteen managers are aware of their responsibilities regarding veteran's preference. If the HR office is posting the announcement, vacancies are handled like any other in the medical center, with a certificate of eligibility sent to the canteen.

Appointments: The legal authority for making appointments to VCS positions (and most other VCS personnel actions) is 38 U.S.C., Sect. 7802. These are Excepted Service positions, comparable to Title 38 appointments of doctors, nurses, and hybrid occupations. New hires, and hourly-rate employees appointed as canteen chiefs/assistants must serve a one-year probationary trial period. Reinstatement of former VCS Title 38 managers will have to serve a new probationary/trial period if they were off the rolls for two years or more.



Official Personnel Files (OPFs) for canteen chiefs/assistants are maintained at the VCSCO-HR Office. Local stations, upon in-processing new canteen managers, are required to maintain a “dummy” OPF, sending original copies of SF-50s (Official Personnel Actions) and other documents to VCSCO-HR. Additionally, upon a transfer of a canteen manager, the “dummy” OPF should be forwarded to the new servicing HR office.

### ***Learning Activities:***

- Visit VCS web site at <http://vaww.vcsc.med.va.gov/vcsc/homepg.htm> and review VCS Policy Directive on Appointment of Canteen Management Personnel and VCS Policy Directive on Canteen Chief Vacancies. Also review VCS Policy Letter #94-25, Use of Temporary Positions in VCS Canteens, and VCS Policy Letter #97-30, Appointment Determinations -Non U.S. Citizens.

### ***POSITION CLASSIFICATION:***

Grades of canteen chief positions are classified using a sales volume criteria. Sales volume requirements are adjusted annually by the Consumer Price Index (CPI). If a particular canteen exceeds the required sales volume, the position may be “reclassified” to a higher grade. If the required sales volume is not met, the Canteen Chief position may be “reclassified” to a lower grade. Grade and pay retention do not apply to actions resulting from the grading criteria.

VCS Central Office has authority to classify VC hourly rate positions, e.g., Sales Associate, Operations Clerk, Office Clerk and Supply Clerk. Craft and Trade positions, e.g., Food Service Workers and Cooks (NA, NL, NS) must be classified by the medical center HR office (or VISN office if required) using OPM classification standards. VCS Central Office maintains a library of standardized NA, NL, and NS position descriptions, which are already classified and used by canteen managers. Classification appeals for these positions are initially reviewed by the local HR office, and forwarded to the VCSCO for classification decisions if resolution cannot be reached.

### ***Learning Activities:***

- Visit VCS web site at <http://vaww.vcsco.med.va.gov/vcsco/homepg.htm> and review VCS Policy Directive 02-02, Position Grading Criteria for Chief, Canteen Service, and VCS Policy Directive 02-03, Change-to-Lower Grade, VCS Title 38 Canteen Chiefs and Assistants.
- Review VA Handbook/Directive 5003, Position Classification and Job Grading.
- Review VCS Executive Management Program (EMP), March 2001.

### ***EMPLOYEE RELATIONS:***

Disciplinary/Adverse Actions: VCS's philosophy on discipline is to correct deficiencies in an employee's behavior and attitude, correct situations that interfere with VCS operations, maintain high standards of government service, and maintain public confidence. The focus must be on correcting, rehabilitating, and developing employees. Discipline must also be progressive in nature and commensurate with the infraction. The VCSCO-HR Office works closely with Canteen Chiefs and local VA Medical Center HR Offices to ensure disciplinary actions are processed in a timely manner and in accordance with the VCS philosophy.

As outlined in the provisions of Title 38 U.S.C. Chapter 78, Section 7802, VCS employees are appointed, compensated from funds of the Service, and removed without regard to the provisions of Title 5 governing appointments in the competitive service. In the event a disciplinary action is proposed against a VCS employee, the following guidelines are applicable:

- Disciplinary actions on all VCS managers/supervisors, i.e., Canteen Chiefs, Assistant Chiefs, Associate Chiefs, etc., are prepared and administered by the VCSCO Resources and Support HR Office.



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## APPENDIX E

- Disciplinary actions, suspensions of any duration, removals, and demotions involving any VCS employee are prepared and administered by the VCSCO-HR office. Coordination with respective HR offices, involving all disciplinary actions, will be required to ensure all aspects of a case are considered.
- Disciplinary actions, including counseling letters, admonishments, reprimands, termination of temporary appointments, and discharges during probationary period on VCS hourly rate employees, may be prepared by the local VA Medical Center HR Office. Informational copies of these actions should be forwarded to the VCSCO Resources and Support Office via FAX at (314) 845-1203.
- VCS preference eligible employees subject to adverse actions may file an appeal with either the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB), the negotiated grievance procedures, or by filing a discrimination complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).
- VCS non-preference eligible employees may file an appeal through the negotiated grievance procedures, or by filing a discrimination complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Non-preference eligibles do not retain MSPB appeal rights when subject to adverse actions.

### ***Learning Activities:***

- Visit VCS web site at <http://vaww.vcsco.med.va.gov/vcsco/homepg.htm> and review training module on VCS Disciplinary/Adverse Actions. Also review VCS Policy Directive 00-07, Procedures for Proposing and Deciding Disciplinary/Adverse Actions.
- Review VCS Operating Procedures, Chapter 541-04, Discipline and Adverse Actions.
- Review Title 38, U.S. C. Chapter 78, Section 7802, Veterans Canteen Service.

### ***LABOR RELATIONS:***

The VCS is committed to working at all management levels to establish and improve effective Labor/Management Relations. The VCS philosophy regarding labor/management relations is designed to ensure a quality work environment for all VA/VCS employees, more efficient administration of VA/VCS programs, and improved service to our Veterans. Sincere cooperation, open communication, mutual respect, sharing of information, and jointly resolving problems are the guiding principles for effective relations. Non-management VCS employees are covered by various collective bargaining unit agreements, i.e., AFGE, NAGE, SEIU, etc. Therefore, the following guidelines are applicable in coordinating VCS labor relation issues with VCSCO-HR.

- All Unfair Labor Practices (ULPs), Requests for Information, Demand to Bargain, etc., relating to VCS issues, will be coordinated with the VCSCO Resources and Support HR Office. Written responses will be coordinated to ensure all issues and ramifications are clearly defined and/or anticipated.
- Grievances at the Step 1 level will be coordinated with the local Canteen Manager. Grievances at the Step 2 and 3 levels must be forwarded to the VCSCO Resources and Support HR Office for appropriate coordination.

### ***Learning Activities:***

- Visit VCS web site at <http://vaww.vcsco.med.va.gov/vcsco/homepg.htm> and review training module on VCS Labor-Management Relations.
- Review the VA/AFGE Master Agreement, Article 57, Veterans Canteen Service. Also review Article 42, Grievance Procedures, Section 7, Note 1 pertaining to VCS employees.
- Review VCS Operating Procedures, Chapter 541-06, Labor-Management Relations.

### ***PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT:***

All VCS employees are included in the VA's Performance Management/ Appraisal Program.

Performance appraisals for all VCS annual rate positions, i.e., Canteen Chiefs, Assistant Chiefs, and Associate Chiefs are completed by either the Canteen Chief or Regional Manager and then forwarded to the VCSCO Resources and Support HR Office for filing in employee's OPF. A copy is also provided to local HR offices for insertion into the dummy OPF. Performance appraisals for hourly rate employees are completed by either the Canteen Chief or Assistant Chief and filed in the employees OPF. Unlike most of the VA, the VCS' rating cycle differs. The rating period for VCS employees is February 1<sup>st</sup> through January 31<sup>st</sup>.

### ***Learning Activities:***

- Visit VCS web site at <http://vaww.vcsco.med.va.gov/vcsco/homepg.htm> and review training module on VCS Performance Management.
- Review VA Handbook/Directive 5013, Title 5 Performance Appraisal Program.
- Review VCS Operating Procedures, Chapter 541-02, Performance Evaluation.

### ***PAY ADMINISTRATION:***

Title 38, U.S.C, Chapter 78 delegates authority to the Director, VCS for establishing rates of pay for VCS employees exempt from coverage of Public Law 92-392, and the Federal Wage System. This authority extends to RMs, Canteen Chiefs, Assistants Chiefs and Hourly Rate canteen positions in the retail, clerical, and administrative system, e.g., Operations Clerk, Office Clerk, Supply Clerk, and Sales Associate.

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## APPENDIX E

VCS employees engaged in a recognized trade or craft, e.g., Food Service Worker and Cook, are covered under the provisions of the Federal Wage System, and Public Law 92-392.

### Wage Schedules:

VCS annual rate wage schedules: The VCSCO Resources and Support HR Office establishes annual rate wage schedules for Canteen Chiefs/Assistants and RMs. Included in these schedules are annual locality adjustments.

VCS hourly rate wage schedules: Hourly rate wage schedules are established by wage surveys conducted by the Department of Defense (DOD) Wage Fixing Authority. These surveys are done at regular intervals throughout the country.

Pay Setting - Initial appointment: VCS Chiefs/Assistants, and RMs - Pay may be set at any step of the grade as salaries are negotiable. Hourly rate employees - pay is set at step 1 of the grade. For Craft and Trade positions, DOD may authorize in-hire step rates and canteen managers may offer higher in-hire rates for administrative hourly positions.

### Pay Setting - Promotions:

Managers: One step increase if promotion is in-place (same duty station). Two step increase if promotion requires relocation. Time-in-grade provisions do not apply for VCS Title 38 management positions.

Hourly rate: Calculated the same as WG positions (4% of representative rate is added to current wage, and result is slotted on new grade).

### ***Learning Activities:***

- Visit VCS web site at <http://vaww.vcsco.med.va.gov/vcsco/homepg.htm> and review VCS Policy Directive 02-04, Pay Setting on Promotions.
- Review VCS Operating Procedures, Chapter 511, Pay Administration.

### **OFFICE OF WORKERS COMPENSATION PROGRAM (OWCP):**

The VCS OWCP Prevention and Case Management Program is designed to take a pro-active approach in controlling/managing OWCP costs. The goal of the program is, at the earliest opportunity, to return VCS employees, who incur an on-the-job injury, back to full and/or light duty, depending on the medical situation.

Features of the program include safety, accident prevention, early case intervention, light duty positions, aggressive investigation of suspect claims, and appropriate coordination and follow-up with local VA Medical Center Human Resources Office and Department of Labor.

OWCP claims filed by VCS employees should be processed through the local VA Medical Center Human Resources Office.

Informational copies of all claim forms, e.g., CA-1, CA-2, etc., or the Report of Accident form that is generated from the ASSISTS program, should be Faxed to the VCS Resources and Support Office within 48 hours of receipt of the claim. The VCS Resources and Support Office FAX number is (314) 845-1203.

### ***Learning Activities:***

- Visit VCS web site at <http://vaww.vcsco.med.va.gov/vcsco/homepg.htm> and review VCS Canteen Supplemental Standard (CSS) 20-3, Workers Compensation Program.

### ***TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT:***

The VCS relies on local medical centers to include VCS employees in training programs. All VCS employees are required to complete mandatory VA training and/or training imposed by the medical center. In-light of the VCS's mission, traditional training methods (classroom) may not always be feasible or the most efficient means to train VCS employees. Web-based training, or special training programs can be developed between the chief and the local training officer.

VCS employees have access to the VCS Knowledge Center. The center contains self-instructional modules addressing job-specific training and developmental training courses. Regardless of the methods used to train VCS employees, all training should be properly recorded and employee data records up-dated.

### ***Learning Activities:***

- Visit VCS web site at <http://vaww.vcsco.med.va.gov/vcsco/homepg.htm> and review training modules.

### VA's Five Core Competencies for HR Professionals

**Understanding the Role of Human Resources** - Understands and supports the different roles and functions of the HR staff.

**Understanding the Business** - Understands customers' organization and business. Engages with customer staff to build trust relationship and provide products and services that meet customers' business needs.

**Communicating** - Communicates effectively with employees and officials at all organizational levels. Demonstrates interpersonal skills that support environment in which good communications take place.

**Change Consultant** - Consults with individuals and organizations to identify and bring about needed change.

**Strategic Partner** - Helps organizations implement effective HR programs.

*The following competencies and definitions come from the OPM Model Two-Year Training Plan for Entry-Level Federal Human Resources (HR) Specialists (GS 5-9), which is under development and scheduled for publication in FY 2003. The ten technical competencies were originally published in the Classification Standard for the GS-200 series (December 2000).*

### **Technical Competencies and Definitions**

**Recruitment and Placement** - Knowledge of the principles, policies, and methods of recruitment, selection, placement, and job analysis; ability to advise management in identifying, attracting, and retaining a high-quality and diverse workforce that is capable of accomplishing the organization's mission.

**Compensation** - Knowledge of the principles, policies, and methods of compensation administration and analysis, salary and wage administration; ability to advise management in developing and implementing compensation strategies that will ensure the effective recruitment, management, and retention of a high-quality and diverse workforce.

**Classification** - Knowledge of the principles, policies, and methods of position evaluation and establishing and maintaining a position classification program to determine appropriate pay system, occupational grouping, title and grade of positions.

**Employee Relations** - Knowledge of the principles, policies, and methods for establishing and maintaining employer-employee relationships that contribute to satisfactory productivity, motivation, morale and discipline.

**Labor Relations** - Knowledge of the principles, policies, and methods for establishing and maintaining effective relationships, including the use of non-traditional collaborative approaches, with labor organizations that represent Federal employees; ability to negotiate and administer labor agreements and provide advice, guidance, and consultation to management on a variety of labor relations matters.



**Performance Management** - Knowledge of the principles, policies, and methods necessary to assist managers and supervisors in establishing, maintaining and monitoring an effective performance management programs to plan, monitor, develop, rate, and reward employee performance, and services that support formal and informal award programs to provide employees incentives and recognition.

**Employee Development** - Knowledge of the principles, policies, and methods for planning, administering, or evaluating programs designed to develop employees.

**Employee Benefits** - Knowledge of the principles, policies, and methods necessary to provide guidance, consultation to agencies, employees, former employees, annuitants, survivors and eligible family members regarding retirement, insurance, and health benefits, and injury compensation.

**Information Systems** - Knowledge of the principles, policies, and methods of HR information systems development, delivery, management, and maintenance.

### General Competencies and Definitions

**Writing** - Recognizes or uses correct English grammar, punctuation, and spelling; communicates information (e.g., facts, ideas, or messages) in a succinct and organized manner; produces written information, which may include technical materials, that is appropriate for the intended audience.

**Reading** - Understands and interprets written material, including technical material, rules, regulations, instructions, reports, charts, graphs, or tables; applies what is learned from written material to specific situations.

**Learning** - Uses efficient learning techniques to acquire and apply new knowledge and skills; uses training, feedback, or other opportunities for self-learning and development.

**Administration and Management** - Plans, coordinates, and executes business functions, resource allocation, and production.

**Memory** - Recalls information that has been presented previously.

**Interpersonal Skills** - Shows understanding, friendliness, courtesy, tact, empathy, concern, and politeness to others; develops and maintains effective relationships with others; may include effectively dealing with individuals who are difficult, hostile, or distressed; relates well to people from varied backgrounds and different situations; is sensitive to cultural diversity, race, gender, disabilities, and other individual differences.

**Oral Communication** - Expresses information (e.g., ideas or facts) to individuals or groups effectively, taking into account the audience and nature of the information (e.g., technical, sensitive, controversial); makes clear and convincing oral presentations; listens to others, attends to nonverbal cues, and responds appropriately.

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## APPENDIX F

**Customer Service** - Works with clients and customers (i.e., any individuals who use or receive the services or products that the work unit produces, including the general public, individuals who work in the agency, other agencies, or organizations outside the Government) to assess their needs, provide information or assistance, resolve their problems, or satisfy their expectations; knows about available products and services; is committed to providing quality products and services.

**Teamwork** - Encourages and facilitates cooperation, pride, trust, and group identity; fosters commitment and team spirit; works with others to achieve goals.

**Attention to Detail** - Is thorough when performing work and conscientious about attending to detail.

**Reasoning** - Identifies rules, principles, or relationships that explain facts, data, or other information; analyzes information and makes correct inferences or draws accurate conclusions.

**Decision Making** - Makes sound, well-informed, and objective decisions; perceives the impact and implications of decisions; commits to action, even in uncertain situations, to accomplish organizational goals; causes change.

**Planning and Evaluating** - Organizes work, sets priorities, and determines resource requirements; determines short- and long-term goals and the strategies to achieve them; coordinates with other organizations or parts of the organization to accomplish goals; monitors progress and evaluates outcomes.

**Problem Solving** - Identifies problems; determines accuracy and relevance of information; uses sound judgment to generate and evaluate alternatives, and to make recommendations.

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## APPENDIX F

**Flexibility** - Is open to change and new information; adapts behavior or work methods in response to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles; effectively deals with ambiguity.

**Integrity/Honesty** - Contributes to maintaining the integrity of the organization; displays high standards of ethical conduct and understands the impact of violating these standards on an organization, self, and others; is trustworthy.

**Self-Management** - Sets well-defined and realistic personal goals; displays a high level of initiative, effort, and commitment towards completing assignments in a timely manner; works with minimal supervision; is motivated to achieve; demonstrates disciplined behavior.

**Stress Tolerance** - Deals calmly and effectively with high stress situations (e.g., tight deadlines, hostile individuals, emergency situations, dangerous situations).

**Self-Esteem** - Believes in own self-worth; maintains a positive view of self and displays professional image.

**Creative Thinking** - Uses imagination to develop new insights into situations and applies innovative solutions to problems; designs new methods where established methods and procedures are inapplicable or unavailable.

**Information Management** - Identifies a need for and knows where and how to gather information; organizes and maintains information or information management systems.

**Technology Application** - Knows how to use machines and equipment effectively; uses computers and computer applications to analyze and communicate information in the appropriate format.

### Suggested Readings

***Handbook of Human Resource Management in Government.***

Stephen E Condrey. Jossey-Bass, 1998

***The SHRM Learning System – Federal HR Practices***, 1999

[http://www.shrm.org/learning/fed\\_hr\\_practices.html](http://www.shrm.org/learning/fed_hr_practices.html)

***2002 Federal Personnel Guide.*** FPMI Communications.

[http://www.fpmi.com/bk/show\\_book.cgi?book\\_id=112](http://www.fpmi.com/bk/show_book.cgi?book_id=112)

***Human Resource Essentials - Your Guide to Starting and Running the HR Function.*** Lin Grensing-Pophal. SHRM, 2002

***Foundations of Human Resource Development.*** Richard A. Swanson, Elwood F Holton III. Berrett-Koehler, 2001

***The Compensation Handbook - A State-of-the-Art Guide to Compensation Strategy and Design (4th Ed.).*** Dorothy R and Lance A Berger. McGraw-Hill, 1999

***Federal Employment Laws and Regulations.*** Jackson Lewis. ACCP/HRCOMPLY, 2002

***Working Together: A Collaborative Guide to Labor-Management Relationships.*** FPMI Communications.

[http://www.fpmi.com/bk/show\\_book.cgi?book\\_id=105](http://www.fpmi.com/bk/show_book.cgi?book_id=105)

***Labor Relations Library*** FPMI Communications.

[http://www.fpmi.com/bk/show\\_book.cgi?book\\_id=108](http://www.fpmi.com/bk/show_book.cgi?book_id=108)

***Understanding the Federal Retirement Systems (4th Ed.).*** FPMI Communications.

[http://www.fpmi.com/bk/show\\_book.cgi?book\\_id=36](http://www.fpmi.com/bk/show_book.cgi?book_id=36)

***Customer Service in Government.*** FPMI Communications.

[http://www.fpmi.com/bk/show\\_book.cgi?book\\_id=14](http://www.fpmi.com/bk/show_book.cgi?book_id=14)

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## APPENDIX G

***How To Say It At Work - Putting Yourself Across with Power Words and Phrases, Body Language, and Communication Secrets.*** Jack Griffin, Tom Power. Prentice Hall Press, 1998

***Quantum Creativity: Nine Principles to Transform the Way You Work.*** Pamela Meyer. McGraw Hill, 2000

***The Making of a Mediator: Developing Artistry in Practice.*** Michael D. Lang, Alison Taylor. Jossey-Bass, 2000

***The HR Scorecard: Linking People, Strategy, and Performance.*** Brian E. Becker, Mark A. Huselid, Dave Ulrich. Harvard Business School Pr, 2001

***Managing Multiple Projects.*** Michael and Irene Tobis. McGraw-Hill, 2002

***Who Moved My Cheese.*** Spencer Johnson, Kenneth Blanchard. Putnam Publishing, 1998

***Fish! A Remarkable Way to Boost Morale and Improve Results.*** Stephen C. Lundin, Harry Paul, John Christensen. Hyperion, 2000

***If It's Broken, You Can Fix It: Overcoming Dysfunction in the Workplace.*** Tom E. Jones. AMACOM, 1999

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